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THINGS WORTH THINKING ABOUT

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A SERIES OF LECTURES

UPON

LITERATURE AND CULTURE

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following short studies were originally delivered as Lectures before various societies, and subsequently appeared in the columns of the Melbourne *Argus*. They are here reprinted with such slight revision as their present collection seemed to render desirable.

They will be found to be closely connected in intention, since they all alike aim at encouraging in an undogmatic way that humaner culture and that open-mindedness and receptivity which alone can counteract the harsh and vulgarizing materialism wherewith our future development as a people is palpably threatened.

If this oneness of purpose has caused some reiteration here and there, it is hoped that such repetition will prove rather helpful than offensive.

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OUR EARLIEST ANCESTORS AND THEIR BELIEFS.

Among the most attractive studies is that of the development of the powers of human mind, of that part in us which distinguishes us from the brutes. If we would speculate on the future of humanity; if we want to find out whether man is growing more or whether he is growing less like the angels as centuries roll by; and if we want to have a reasoned basis for the conclusion we do come to, and not to rest it merely on that self-conceit which is wont to arise during epochs of material progress; it is worth our while to go back as far into the past as we can, and to consider the mental condition of our ancestors —I would almost say the earlier stages of ourselves —at the most remote time at which we can be said to discover them. As we proceed back from one millennium to another—for centuries, in a connection like this, count for little—we may look for tokens of a growth in certain faculties and virtues and powers, and for a diminution in certain brutalities. We may look for an advance in moral ideas, and in

penetration of intellect; and anyone who attempts this quest in an unprejudiced and scientific manner will undoubtedly find what he would fain expect. He will find that in the power of reason and in purity of conduct, as well as in physical advantages, we are many stages further on the road to human perfection than were the earliest peoples whom we can be said to know.

Yet there both have been and are many of the opposite view. The ancients had a tradition of a gradual decline of the world. Homer speaks disparagingly of "the men that live in these degenerate days," and the poets tell us that the earliest age of the world was a golden age, an age of justice and righteousness and peace and spontaneous plenty, and that there followed it in deteriorating succession a silver, a bronze, and at last an iron age. But as a human being is, after all, a very hopeful sort of pessimist, they nevertheless looked for a return in some happy future of that age of gold.

And if you do not attach much value to the notions of an ancient Greek or Roman—and I believe it is getting fashionable to feign an ignorant contempt of them—you may, at least, have observed that many of our own ancients are "belauders of days gone by," of what they call "the good old times." Perhaps it is an amiable trait in aged persons to be faithful to a dead past; perhaps it is not an unamiable trait in youth that it believes in progress. But, after all, the belief in the good old past is based on sentiment, while the belief in the

good young future is based on both sentiment and reason.

You may be asking what all this has to do with my subject. Well, it is meant partly to prepare you for a not very gratifying picture which I shall have to draw of the mental condition of our ancestors in that dim time to which philological science, the study of language and its laws, can carry us back; partly it is meant to make what I have to say as apparently credible as it is scientifically true. There are persons now-a-days who are like the ancients in imagining a lost golden age of humanity, and who, looking at the peoples that now are on the face of the earth, mourn that the savage has fallen so far from his high and enlightened estate, and that the so-called civilized man too has fallen at least in some degree I am here to speak of some of the results of a study which comes to quite the opposite conclusion, a study which finds reason to rejoice that civilized man has risen so high, and that the barbarian is rising after him. I am going to hold that our own ancestors were once as savage as any existing savages, in morals, in religious views, and in intellectual and material resources. And I take leave, further, to think that we too are savages to what man will be in the hereafter.

All the studies which are engaged in searching into antiquity will support this cheerful view. There are several such studies now being scientifically pursued. They are interpenetrating each other, illuminating each other, at more and more points.

There is, for instance, the biological study, which investigates the growth of the physical man; there is the study of history, which traces the changes in his social and political ideas; there is archæology, which examines his implements and productions at different periods; there is the comparative study of religions, which traces his expanding views of the spiritual world; and there is a study with which I have to do, and which, so far as the mind is concerned, can go further back than any other—the comparative study of languages—a study which learns from words and their history how confined and elementary were the ideas of those who first used them.

All these branches of inquiry discover the same cheering tale of the growth of light and the growth of sweetness in humanity; but the study of language tells it most conclusively and goes deepest down. It reaches far beyond history. Historical study, in its narrower sense, draws its materials from written records, and written records belong to advanced civilization. Historical study, therefore, cannot help us in regard to those periods which lie far beyond the invention of writing; but the science of language penetrates to a very primitive condition of things. It does not stop at cuneiform inscriptions or Egyptian hieroglyphics. These are only its instruments for deeper delving. Linguistic study cannot, of course, tell us everything. It cannot tell us for certain whether the primitive ancestors of our own stock dwelt in Asia or in Europe, whether they were tall or short, and so forth; but it can tell us by

what devices they expressed their conceptions, what conceptions those were, and how they developed. It can betray to us many significant facts—as, for instance, that, at a comparatively recent period, they had a very inadequate sense of colour, of the distinction between blue and black, green and yellow. It can reveal to us that they had little ear for musical harmony, their notion of music being that of the wind among the trees, or, as the Greeks afterwards called it in their myth, the music of Orpheus—for Orpheus, in his Hindu form, Ribhu, is the wind. And thus there can be little doubt that, with eye and ear at least, we human beings are developing new delicacies of sensation and discrimination.

A most important revelation made by the study of language is the revelation of the religious ideas of those pre-historic ancestors and of the steps by which their beliefs passed into pagan myths, into the mythologies of Greece and Rome, India and Persia, Germany and Scandinavia. So much light has the scientific study of language thrown upon all this question that a new science has come into existence —very imperfect, no doubt, as yet, but gaining continually in clearness and system—the science of comparative mythology. In this study I have exercised myself somewhat, and I want to-night to set before you, in a way as free from technicalities as I can, the conclusions which I believe to be most trustworthy concerning the earliest ascertainable beliefs of that part of the pre-historic world's population from which we are descended. I shall avoid very

disputable points, and, of course, in lectures like this, one expects to do more good by throwing out a series of suggestions to be thought over, than by epitomizing the results of an extensive science.

There are many who have wondered at a very striking anomaly in the civilization of the ancient peoples of Greece and Rome. "Here," they say, "are peoples whose literature is of the highest finish, whose art in sculpture and building can never be too much admired, whose philosophical inquiries were ardent and acute; and yet what a religion was theirs! How infinitely below their arts and manners! How inconsistent, how absurd, how morally gross!" There is no wonder that people should say this, and perhaps there is little wonder that persons whose acquaintance with Greece and Rome is but slight should judge from the absurdity and impropriety of their myths that, after all, the Greeks and Romans were not the civilized peoples, not worth the study, we make out. It will be part of my subject to deal with this anomaly, to say how these unworthy myths arose, and to point out why it was that a civilized people continued to entertain them. We may find in the study of language a sufficiently intelligible and natural reason for both their origin and their preservation. The ancients themselves, in their sceptical moods, scarcely knew what to make of their traditions. One adventurous reasoner suggested that the myths were pure inventions, intended to inculcate moral lessons. Of very questionable morality, indeed, would the lessons be, and, therefore,

his theory found little acceptance. Another thought them a series of allegories, intended to teach the principles of physical science. Yet another, the renowned Euhemerus, declared that they were legends embodying real historical facts, exploits of real men and women exalted into myths. The same view was taken of the Teutonic mythology by that worthy gentleman of the middle ages, Saxo Grammaticus. Bacon, again, has a series of allegorical explanations of such traditions, and heads them with the title, "Wisdom of the Ancients." All these rationalizing efforts were wide of the mark, as will, I think, be seen.

Again, there are many who, going a little deeper into this subject, have noticed distinct resemblances between the extinct myths of Greece and the living myths of barbarian peoples now-a-days—those of the Polynesians for example, or of the Red Indians—and, with that hastiness of conclusion which comes of a lack of scientific training, they have invented ingenious theories of a genealogical connection between Polynesians and Red Indians and Greeks; or they have even supposed that these beliefs have found their way by promulgation from land to land, just as we promulgate Christianity by missions.

And, once more, those who are interested in what is called folk-lore—that is to say, in the popular superstitions, fables, and nursery tales which are passed on from generation to generation, such as the stories of Jack the Giant-killer and Cinderella, the use of the divining rod for the discovery of hidden treasure, the belief that a dog howling about

a house portends a death in the family, and so on—those, I say, who are interested in comparing these as they are told on the Ganges, on the Volga, or in the Hebrides, are apt to be startled at the great similarity between them, and to run away into wrong conclusions. To explain these phenomena will fall within my scope; for all those old legends and fables and superstitions arise from what were once religious beliefs, from a method of mythology which once prevailed among the ancestors of all these various peoples alike.

I do not, however, propose to speak of the myths of all the world, but shall, except for purposes of illustration, confine myself to those of our own ancestors. And when I say our own ancestors I do not mean the ancestors of such of us as may be Saxons or of such as may be Celts, but I mean the ancestors of a wider stock, the stock that long ago spread itself from one original home over all the land from Gibraltar to Calcutta, and from Crete to the North Cape. I shall, I fear, in what I now have to say for a short time, be giving no new information to some of you. But I trust these more learned persons will bear with me while I make what may prove a necessary explanation to others present. In some far-off pre-historic time—it may be 5,000 years ago, or it may be many more—the Teutons, Sclavs, Celts, Greeks, Italians, Persians, and Hindus did not exist as separate peoples with differences of speech, religion, habits, and appearance. There was in that dim time one people, a rude and unrefined people,

with great possibilities of development, no doubt, with germs of great moral and intellectual energy such as were not possessed by other peoples which then occupied the earth, but with only germs. The great capacities which have made it what it is were yet latent. There were, of course, numerous other stocks upon the face of the earth, some of which, such as the Semitic, can be well defined. But the one of which I am speaking is very distinct, and will be treated alone. And be it observed that we are dealing here with no such wild notions as that of Anglo-Israelism and such-like inanities, but with scientific fact.

What to call this primitive people is a difficult question. Because from them are descended almost all the inhabitants of Europe and of that part of Asia which is about the River Indus, we call them Indo-Europeans—a clumsy and unsatisfactory name, which makes us think of the divided elements rather than of the primitive unity. Some, altogether wrongly, call them Aryans, a title which properly belongs only to those of the stock who dwell in Asia. Physically their chief characteristics were their light hair, eyes, and complexion, and Professor Huxley, with that habit of defining characteristics which belongs to the cultured and literary scientist, calls them Xanthochroi—a Greek compound meaning blonde—as opposed to the Melanchroi, the swarthy dark-eyed stocks. I wish we might accept this word instead of our "Indo-Europeans," because it not only contains no element of untruth, but is also commend-

able as bringing before us an important physical distinction. Where the cradle of the race was, where was the centre from which it expanded like an expanding wave, is a debated question. Some say in Central Asia, about the River Oxus; but my own belief, founded on arguments which I could give if this were occasion for them—principally arguments connected with the earliest ascertained migrations of the several peoples, or with the crops and trees and animals and climate with which the original people must have been familiar, or with matters of a more technical nature involving delicate similarities of language—my own belief, founded on these arguments, is that these Xanthochroi, these ancestors of Celt and Hindu, Greek and Scandinavian, dwelt in a country extending along the south-eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, and inland where Prussia and Russia now border on each other. From this region they spread west and east and south, not of deliberate intent, perhaps—not perhaps, as a deliberately conquering people, but as their own fecundity compelled them, and as more fertile or more sunny lands invited them insensibly on. And so some found their way round the Caspian Sea, and as far as India; others were urged southward into the peninsulas of Greece and Italy and Spain; others passed westward to France and Britain, or, after reaching Denmark, crossed northward into Scandinavia. But they did not find all this country uninhabited. The southern parts, at least, were apparently occupied by a shorter race with dark skins

and hair and eyes, with a different language and different customs. The expanding Xanthochroi pressed these before them down into the farthest peninsulas and corners, into Italy and Spain and the Peloponnese, and when they could press them no further they partly absorbed them into themselves by intermarrying with them, and thereby modified their own distinctive character and appearance. And this is in all probability the reason why the two sorts of people —the dark and the blonde—exist among us. This, too, is the reason why the dark predominates among the peoples of Spain and Italy, while the light predominates among the Germans and the Scandinavians, who, being left in the original home, the later born of the original stock, had no such Melanchroic peoples to subdue and to blend with. The Xanthochroi are still spreading. We are still crowding out the other stocks. North and South America and Australia are practically ours, and Asia is apparently falling also into the hands of the Xanthochroic Sclav, who is still pressing out from the original abode.

Let us return to our primitive people. While yet it was one, we know something—I may say we know very much—of its condition. It had clothes and wattled huts, it ploughed and sowed, it had rowing boats, it had cattle and horses, and carts, and it had some sort of metal. It had hamlets, but no cities. The family relations existed, but we do not know exactly how close these were felt to be. A still closer study of language, however, is held to reveal below all this a more primitive, a ruder form of life, in a

still dimmer time, when the same stock, which afterwards used a certain tool, did not possess that tool, but used bare hands or clumsy devices such as savages use; a time when they did not know how to produce fire, but had to obtain it by accident, or to borrow it from one kept always burning; when consequently they often ate raw food; a time, in short, when they were miserable savages, as bad as the veriest Hottentot. If now you will believe that this original common ancestry did once exist, and if you will attribute to them an extremely rudimentary civilization, you will not be surprised, on the one hand, that certain legends extend all the way from the Himalayas to the Atlantic, nor, on the other, that those legends are frequently childish and immoral.

It will not be dangerous for me to say that religious belief, like everything else, grows more refined and reasonable with the advance of time; nor will anyone deny—that is to say, no student of history will deny—that there is in religious beliefs an ascertainable natural development. Those who make any comparative study of religions—those who watch even superficially the changes which have occurred throughout the world in succeeding ages in the conception which man entertains of his relation to some greater power outside himself—find that there are regular steps up which that conception mounts. Savage peoples begin with a vague belief in spirits, souls of ancestors and other souls, which are to be propitiated, to be kept away, or else to be mastered.

The savage thinks he can control the spirit by magical arts and incantations. He does not love the spirit, nor worship it from any reverent disposition of mind —he fears it, and seeks to bribe it, or else to circumvent it. Sometimes the spirit is habitant, either by choice or compulsion, in some visible object, and that object is thereupon worshipped. It becomes a fetish, and, after what I have said, you will not be surprised to find that the fetish is occasionally kicked and cuffed. Savagery of this sort is not dead yet, even in civilized countries, for the uneducated Italian peasant woman in her wrath still cuffs her little image. The religious state of mind—if you can call it religious—which I am describing, is technically known as animism, and in it, as you can readily understand, there is no room for moral suggestion.

Next, as time goes on, certain spiritual powers grow in dignity and in width of operation. The idea of gods begins to develop itself. The powers and phenomena of nature—the sky, the earth, the sun, the wind, the dawn—become deities. The sky itself, the sun itself, is a spirit-god—not the habitation of a god nor the realm of a god, but actually and literally itself a god. And as these powers and phenomena are numerous, the gods are equally numerous; the night sky is a different deity from the day sky, and the storm wind from the gentle breeze. These greater spirits, too, can be propitiated by offerings or worked upon by magic. The South African of to-day seeks to control an eclipse by beating his tom-tom. The old Xanthochroi witches sought to bring down the

influence of the moon with spells. And while these greater spirits are worshipped, the lower animism of which I have spoken, the worship of ancestors, the propitiation of them by sacrifice—even by human sacrifice—and the custom of fetishism, still go on, less and less perhaps, but always breaking out oddly and inconsistently through the newer beliefs, as, for instance, when persons avoid or affect certain objects as lucky or unlucky, or when they turn their chairs round and round because they are unsuccessful at whist. I want this state of religious belief—this animistic polytheism or polydæmonism—to be properly borne in mind, for it is, we must hold, the state of belief which existed among that primitive ancestral people of which I have spoken.

We have, I may remark, not yet come to any suggestion of moral guidance. A religion like this has no idea of retribution, and its only idea of immortality is that of continuance. It would accordingly concern itself in no degree with the question of morality. How should it? There is nothing moral or immoral about a sky, or a sun, or a wind, and the early barbarian did not begin by assuming that his gods, and such gods, should be beings of a fine morality. His method was not *à priori*. He did not say, "These are the gods I worship, and as gods must, of course, be pure, therefore these are pure." The despairing Greek of later days might say—"If the gods do aught that's wrong, then they are not gods at all," but not so the barbarian. He took his gods as he found them.

Accordingly, when he began to describe the doings of these nature-spirits, he described them as he fancied he saw them, and his descriptions sometimes attributed a moral, sometimes a questionable, and sometimes a decidedly immoral course of action to the sun, or the moon, or the earth. He saw the clouds sweep across the sky, but he knew not the most elementary explanation of science ; he did not know how they moved, unless it was by their own divine volition. He did, indeed, perceive that the wind blew at the time, but he did not know what wind was, or how it blew, or why it blew, unless it was by its own divine will. And then he saw the divine sky and the divine sun apparently struggling with the clouds, and suddenly there was a flash and a crash of thunder and a fall of rain, and he said to himself—"The gods up there are fighting, and the great sky-god is smiting the cloud-gods, and making their blood to flow down upon the earth." Now, this fighting may have been an immoral thing for the gods to indulge in, but the barbarian simply supposed the divine powers to be doing what he himself was accustomed to do under apparently similar circumstances. He himself was an unmoral man of war from his youth up, and knew no better, and when he wanted to explain the operations of the nature-spirits, he represented them, and saw nothing absurd in representing them, as fighting or doing still worse deeds, at which we, indeed, may cover our faces, but in which he saw nothing unbecoming.

To this state of belief—a state common to all primitive peoples—I shall return; but, in order to be as clear as possible upon the question of religious development, I will proceed at present to point out the next step which would naturally be taken by a belief of this kind. It would become anthropomorphic—that is to say, it would no longer be the visible sky and the visible sun and the palpable wind which would be looked upon as a god, but the sky and the sun and the wind would be the god's abode, or his instrument, the place or phenomenon in which his operation lay. He himself would be personified. And so the thought of the deity would become separated from the thought of the concrete or literal object which had first been deified; and sometimes, if the object had borne two or three titles (as, for instance, the sky was called the Shining Place, or the Infinite, or the Coverer), then one of these might be kept to signify the actual object, the actual sky, while the others might by usage become restricted to signify its deity; or all alike might be looked upon as names of deities, and hence there would come to be several gods for one object. In this way the heavens, and the air, and the earth became filled with a host of deities, no longer indeterminate spirits, but personified, endowed with human attributes, immoral as well as moral, deities whose loves and wars and intrigues were just no better and no worse than the wars and intrigues and loves of human beings. It is only when the gods are thus separable from their particular sphere

that you can have a joint abode of them, such as the Greek Olympus or the Teutonic Asgard.

And let us come yet onwards, and learn from the science of language the clue to the persistence of this nature-worship, or rather to the beliefs derived from it in more civilized times. Our earliest Xanthochroic ancestors knew what they were about when they were worshipping the powers of nature. When they first told religious stories about the gods, about a beneficent god slaying a malignant giant, or about a certain male deity ill-treating a certain nymph, they knew they were describing as best they could something they fancied they had seen the powers of nature doing. The heaven raining upon the earth was an impregnation of one divinity by another. Observe the dawn. The dawn apparently springs from "the forehead of the morning sky." That pre-historic people said this much and no more. It was the way they spoke of what they thought they saw in the morning—the Dawn, a veritable goddess, leaping from the forehead of the Sky, a veritable god. Well, you are aware how language changes; you are aware how different our English is from Anglo-Saxon, and Italian from Latin. You know that very many Anglo-Saxon words are quite unintelligible to the modern reader. And, going still further back, you know that English and Dutch are descended from a common speech, and yet how unmeaning the words of the one language are to those who speak the other. And yet we have books to teach us the sense of those old words and special scholars to enlighten us—the

meaning is discoverable in an extant literature. But what, think you, would be the case with that pre-historic people after it broke up, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years after its subdivisions had passed beyond each other's ken? They had no literature, no reference books, no scholars to remind them of the meaning of old words which had grown obsolete except in the religious traditions. Generation after generation those descriptions of what the gods did would be repeated in the household in the self-same forms that had been used in the original home; and those stories and traditions would contain names of deities, which names were once literal titles, signifying bright, infinite, rushing, and so forth, but which had now ceased to be used in ordinary speech —partly, no doubt, because they *were* being used as names of gods—but had given place to synonymous words of another shape. What would be the effect of this? It would be that those names of gods would, in many cases, become mere names, recalling nothing definite, no particular object in nature, but suggesting anthropomorphic divinities, whose powers were to be gathered, not from their names, but from the traditions which contained their names.

Let me give the instance of the dawn springing from the forehead of the morning sky. That earliest people called the day-sky Dyeus, "the shining;" the dawn they called Adhana. But these were divinities, and they said, therefore, that Adhana is born from the forehead of Dyeus. Now, suppose the branches of this stock to have been separated for a thousand

or two thousand years, and suppose one people to have migrated as far as Greece and the Hellenic isles. This people carries with it those old traditions, which form its religious doctrines, told as regularly from father to son as our legends of Cinderella and Red Ridinghood are told from generation to generation in the nursery. By this time those old words Dyeus and Adhana carry to the Greeks no more interpretation in themselves than Anglo-Saxon words do to us. If I told you a story about a certain Bealdor and a certain Wiga you would think of them as names of persons; but Bealdor is only old English for prince, and Wiga for warrior. So it was with the Greeks. They had come to call the sky, whether by day or night, Ouranos, and the dawn they called Eos; and, therefore, when they related how Athene sprang from the head of Zeus (for that is the way they had come to pronounce Adhana and Dyeus), they thought indeed of two deities, but had no conception of the origin of the story. No; from the influence of the analogy of the Semitic goddess Tanith they had begun to regard Athene as the patron goddess of arts, and to their minds the legend therefore taught —if it taught anything—that wisdom is the offspring of the mind of the supreme God. It is easy for you to imagine how many of the traditions became totally unintelligible. The Greeks themselves had half doubts as to whether many of the more immoral stories were to be tolerated; but there was the tradition, thrice ancient, and who were they that they should question what their fathers had taught them?

Should we, do you suppose, if we had been Greeks, unless we had been a Plato or a Socrates, have thrown over an ancestral religion because there were things in it we could not understand, and the propriety of which we doubted? One of their own poets, a sceptic himself (Euripides), says—

> "We set not up our wisdom against Heaven.
> Our fathers' doctrines, old as time itself,
> Our heritage, no reasoning shall cast down,
> For all that intellect may think it sees."

And subsequently, when literature was in demand (and the earliest literatures are mainly religious), poets would embellish these narratives, they would modify them for the sake of novelty or consistency, they would confound the deeds of one god with the deeds of another. When an adventure originally belonging to the sun no longer carried in itself the popular name of the sun, but another name, a title which had once belonged to the sun, but which had now ceased to convey a connection with him—such as Hercules, Sisyphus, or Ulysses—then other deeds and a character might be attached to that Hercules, Sisyphus, or Ulysses which could not properly belong to the sun at all. Thus mythology becomes very complex. This was the state of mythology which prevailed in Greece and Rome in the classic times, in Germany and Scandinavia until a thousand years ago, in India until Brahmanism introduced more of system, in Persia until the reform of Zarathustra.

At this stage the sense of moral responsibility is growing. The evolution of society brings out the

moral sense in man, and man therefore begins to attribute a moral guidance to his gods. He begins to develop an idea of retribution after death. Discredit of the old traditions and rationalizing efforts are on the increase, and so we pass on to the next stage. In this stage a written code—a scripture—takes the place of tradition. The great multitude of deities are subordinated to one chief divinity, or all the spirits are treated as but different *avatars* of one and the same, and thus we get a pantheism, or an ordered polytheism inclining to monotheism. And lastly comes the great world-religion which entirely rids itself of nature-worship, and puts all its trust in one perfect, omnipotent God, and in the efficacy of faith and morality.

I have now given you a superficial sketch—for in the time at my disposal, and in the absence of technical terms, it must be superficial—of the steps by which religious belief develops itself, and has developed itself in our own stock. Let me now return to our primitive people, as I promised to do; for there are two questions which naturally present themselves. The one is—"How do you account for the great resemblances between these myths of our own ancestors and the myths of other stocks, of most remote and barbarous peoples, who appear to have had no connection or communication with the one of which we speak? Why have the Red Indians and Hottentots traditions which differ from those of the Greek or the Scandinavian mainly in the names of the deities concerned?" The other question is—

"How, on the contrary, seeing that Hindus, Romans, and Teutons were originally one people, possessed of a common stock of beliefs, do you account for the wide dissimilarities between them, in the character and powers of their several deities, and often in their names?" Both these questions admit of an easy answer. You will remember that I remarked how the student of religions perceives a regular development in belief all over the world. And you will remember that early religions blend a belief in spirits with a deification of the powers of nature, fetishism with polytheism. This has been the same among all races. All over the world there is or has been a similar way, natural to ignorant barbarians, of looking at the operations of nature. They have all alike heard the storm and the thunder, seen the sun rise and pass over the sky and set, beheld the clouds sometimes floating far aloft like fairy forms, sometimes in fantastic shapes, such as Hamlet talks of, sometimes black and lowering. They have seen the lightning dash forth like a spear or a serpent; they have heard echoes, they have seen stars apparently falling, they have felt the cold and darkness of exceptional winters, and the heat and fire of exceptional summers. Well, these various peoples, seeing and feeling all this, and believing all these natural powers to be a multitude of mighty spirits, have constructed a series of narratives to explain those sights and sounds. In other words they have constructed a mythology.

For what is a mythology? I would wish you to

do away from your minds the idea that nature-myths are allegories or poetical fictions; they are nothing so sophisticated as allegories or fictions; they were originally nothing but explanations, offered in all seriousness and simplicity by the untutored savage. As explanations, they were, no doubt, imaginative and a little far-fetched, but they had to be so, for anything unreal must be imaginative. A myth has been defined as "a product of human fancy working on a most rudimentary knowledge of the outer world." That definition may be taken as sufficient, if we understand that, though the explanation is a fancy, it is nevertheless sincere. If you want to comprehend the state of mind which could seriously explain the wind blowing the nimbus clouds across the sky as the wind-god Saramaias driving home the celestial cows with their udders full—an account which afterwards became the myth of Hermes stealing the oxen: if you want to understand how the lightning-flash could be soberly explained as the heaven-god hurling his shining spear at his foes, the storm-demons—an account which afterwards became the myth of Zeus defeating the Titans, or Thor hurling his hammer Miölner at the Jötuns: if you want to do this, you must evidently make your mind as the mind of a little child, a child who has never heard the word electricity or any other scientific term; a child who thinks the earth is flat, and the sky a roof not so very far above it, who thinks the sun is about as large as he looks, and that he passes over the earth; a child who has not the least con-

ception what wind is, or how it moves, or why the tide rises, or how rain comes to be up there in the clouds. Let anyone here think of his earliest infant fancies about such things, and let him remember that he has not so much grown out of them as been instructed out of them by the long-accumulated teachings of science. He will then not wonder that the primitive barbarian looked upon such things as spirits with a volition of their own. I do not mean to say that there was never any tendency to invent pure fictions. I only maintain that this tendency did not operate at first, nor indeed until comparatively recent times.

Well, here, you see, all the world over is the same material for constructing myths, the same natural powers, differing somewhat in exercise, no doubt, according to the latitude and physical surroundings, but mainly identical. Here, then, we find the reason why the tales of the Sandwich Islands should frequently resemble those of Caffraria, Mexico, or Greece, without any communication whatsoever having existed between those places. The names of the deities will differ, of course, altogether, and the particular turn of the story as heard in New Zealand will differ from that heard in Iceland, but the main plot will be the same, and the only wonder would be if it were not so. Therefore the notion that heaven is the all-father and earth is the all-mother was universal; and that they were perpetually united until their children rent them apart, is a story to be found not only in the Greek myth of Ouranos and

Kronos, but also in the Maori myth of Rangi and Papa. Differences of fancy there must, of course, be with differences of race; and if a savage people attributes—as it certainly does—its own habits to the divine powers, the habits and morals of the gods of the mythologies will indeed differ as much as those of the peoples differ; yet in the main there will be a distinct analogy in their adventures.

Our own ancestors, then, had a religion—if you can call it such—which worshipped the natural powers, the spirits of ancestors, and also fetishes. There are those who—from a desire, I suppose, to think the best of their forefathers—deny that there was any fetish worship among them. But historical evidence is too strong. Fetish stones, fetish trees, and fetish animals are heard of till comparatively late in our civilization. The navel-stone where the oracles were given at Delphi, the whispering oaks at Dodona, the Palladium which was brought in such pomp to Rome, were, after all, only fetishes. The old English customs of dancing round the Maypole and decking the wells are mere survivals of a time when the village community worshipped its fetish tree and its fetish water. I used myself to be much impressed by the thought of the Pelasgians going up to the solitary mountain-top to worship, and of those old Teutons of whom Tacitus says that they went into the woods and worshipped an unseen presence. I used to find something of simple communion with God in these practices. But I am compelled to confess that this was an illusion. They

went to mountain-top and wood, not to commune in secret with God, but to adore a fetish. It is, I repeat, undeniable that fetishism existed among this folk, as undeniable as are all its magic rites and human sacrifices. What are sacrifices and magic? The idea underlying all animistic sacrifice is the idea that the spirits of the dead, looking on at life, are jealous of the living, and grudge them the joys they themselves have lost. They accordingly work the living all manner of malicious ill. But the unsophisticated barbarian thinks that if he surrenders something he values, if he shows that he is considerate of the feelings of those disembodied ones, and does not exult in his own advantage—if, in short, he makes a sacrifice, the spirits will be complimented and mollified. And in the worst state of things, if there is a great calamity, causing death or widespread panic, what sacrifice could be more effective than a human sacrifice? And, undoubtedly those old Xanthochroi did offer up human beings. Even in early Greece among the Pelasgians such sacrifices are heard of, in a half-hearted, shame-faced sort of way, but still heard of they are. So, too, the early Latin peoples devoted a band of chosen youth to death in order to propitiate the war spirit; and when Mettus Curtius leapt into the yawning gulf in the Forum, and when Decius Mus went to certain destruction among the enemy, they were merely illustrating the old notion of propitiation by sacrifice. The old Germans also, and the Wends, and the Celtic Druids offered their human sacrifices in a way as cruel as any African

or Polynesian tribe. And magic is an attempt to influence the spirits in another way, not by propitiating, but by mastering. I have no need to demonstrate that there are still in our very midst well-dressed barbarians who believe in magical arts.

Let us for the moment leave aside the worship of the natural powers, such as earth and sky and dawn and wind, and let us consider this lower side of the belief of our pre-historic kin—I mean its worship of the spirits of ancestors. Concerning the soul and its after-life, their view, so far as I can discover, was something like this. It is an inconsistent view, of course, and we must expect nothing else. When the body is dead, the spirit lingers for a while near it; afterwards it passes to and fro through air and earth, entering into bodies animate or inanimate, appearing at times to men, and capable of working them evil or good. We know what curious and sudden appearances are made by animals, and what mysterious sounds come from woods and rocks. All these were the work of spirits. Those spirits have become the *pitris* of India, the *fravashis* of Persia, the bogies of Teutonic countries, and their worship is being revived now-a-days by the enlightened cult of the table-rappers. Of all the peoples of our stock, those who kept this animistic belief most undeveloped until Christianity reached them were the Letts and Sclavs. Among them we find the spirits represented as sparks, stars, butterflies, birds, shadows, vapours, breaths of air. And I must confess that the Wendic name for

a butterfly, "little soul," is to my mind no unpleasing one.

And here spirit-worship or spirit-belief might have stayed; it might have gone no further, if the idea of gods had not grown up out of a contemplation of the powers of nature. But the notion of these greater deities enlarged the conception of the universe; and the sinking of the sun-god in the west, beyond the sea and under the earth, brought about the fancy that underground there was a shadow-world, like the Semitic Sheôl, and that to reach it the spirit passed away to the west over a river or sea of death. This river of death appears in the traditions of all the branches of our stock. The Norse peoples had their Midgard serpent sea, and would sometimes place their dead chieftains on ships, to be carried away westward without crew or steersman. The Greeks had the river Oceanus encircling all the world and flowing back into himself, like a serpent with its tail in its mouth. Beyond this lay that shadow-world which Ulysses visited. So to this day the dying are allowed to drift down the Ganges; for that custom, too, is a relic of the belief in the old river of death. Sometimes the spirit was represented as passing heavenwards along the Milky Way or the rainbow, as along a bridge, and the Milky Way was therefore called the "bridge of souls." The Wends called it the "mouse-path." It will perhaps be instructive if I use this in illustration of the way in which some sorts of legends develop themselves. Among the animals with which spirits

were associated the mouse was the most frequent. Why, exactly, it is hard to say. A mouse issues curiously from crannies. It seems to come from nowhere in particular, and to disappear no whither in particular. And we may readily believe that in the ill-built houses of that olden people mice were regular inhabitants. The strangely appearing, strangely vanishing, bright-eyed little mouse came to be looked upon as embodying the spirit of a dead ancestor, and gradually mouse and soul became synonymous terms. Hence the "mouse-path" means the soul-path. You all know the story of the Pied Piper who drew the rats out of Hamelin by his piping, and who, when the stipulated payment was refused him, drew all the rosy chubby little children away to doom by piping in the same manner. Reduced to its original elements, this is nothing more than a narrative of some plague, when the children died, when their souls departed from them in the wind. That souls were supposed to be carried off in a wind need not surprise us, and the Pied Piper is after all only the piping wind, the rats or mice (for the ancients did not distinguish them) are the souls of the dying. In the same way, when that wicked bishop who dwelt on the island in the Rhine burned up in his barns all the people who cried to him for food, his punishment was this — thousands upon thousands of mice swam across to the island, climbed the tower, and consumed the wretched man. And what were the mice but the vengeful souls of those dead ones? I could give many such instances as

these of tales still lingering among us derived from those old spirit-beliefs. I will give one more. The wind, I have said, was the agent whereby the departing soul was carried away. In Greek legend this appears as the wind-god Hermes, the psychopomp, he who leads the soul by the hand into the nether world. In the Vedic myths the wind is the dog Yama; for the wind, you know, howls, and so do dogs, and when the ancients heard the wind but could not see it, they thought of it as a spirit-dog. Therefore, when souls departed, they were accompanied by the dog Yama. And when superstitious persons among ourselves say that someone will die in the house because a dog howled last night, they are only repeating one of those old myths of the wind-god and the soul. There is, too, an old warning which is given to children that they should not point at the stars. Why? Well, I do not know what sort of excuse would be invented now, but the origin of the scruple lay in the notion that the stars were ancestors' souls, and should be treated with a proper and distant respect.

This, then, was the more rudimentary animistic side of our forefathers' belief, and almost all our superstitions about lucky and unlucky sights and sounds can be traced back to it. We still have our fancies about the difference for good or evil produced by seeing three magpies or one magpie, one crow or two crows, or by hearing the cuckoo under such and such conditions. All this, when we come to think of it, is precisely of a piece with those beliefs which we

are apt to consider so ridiculous in the pagan Greeks and Romans and Teutons—the beliefs in omens, in auguries from the appearances and numbers of beasts and birds observed on the right hand or on the left, in auspices from the shapes of flames and the chance hearing of casual sounds. These matters assumed to the pagans, highly civilized as they were in other respects, such a vast importance as to be to us altogether ludicrous. Yet, perhaps, those who believed in them do not deserve the contempt that should be shown to those who, in our own day, with all its Christianity and its scientific knowledge, cannot possess their souls in patience because of a magpie or a howling dog. The notion of spirits embodied in certain animals had caused them to be looked upon as prescient, as warning apparitions. Birds fly near to heaven; birds and beasts have peculiar presentiments, perhaps I should say pre-sensations, of storms and changes of climate which man himself cannot foresee. No wonder then that from these reasons, and from the further reason that there really is something mysterious which men are apt to feel instinctively in the face of such birds as the sable raven, with his bright eye and his solemn croak; no wonder, I say, that the early barbarian looked to them for omens. And, when such beliefs had existed for many centuries, and had been embellished and systematized, you could not expect a people who had no scientific or religious revelation to be led to reject the traditions by the promptings of pure reason.

I will now return for a few moments to the higher element of our primitive hierology, to the worship and the traditions connected with the powers of nature. The old ancestor on the Baltic shores adored every manifestation of nature's energy, and explained it by stories which we call myths. Heaven was the all-father, earth was the all-mother, and the rest of gods and men were the offspring of this pair. The heaven-god was the highest divinity—Dyeus, "the brilliant," the shining, and Pater, "the father." Dyeus-pater was, therefore, the name by which he was known, and those whose knowledge of language or mythology is but elementary will recognize the Jupiter of the Romans, the Zeus-pater of the Greeks, the Djaus-pitar of the old Hindus. But, perhaps, you will not recognize the same Dyeus in one of our commonest words—in the word Tuesday, "the day of Tiu," for such is the Germanic pronunciation of the name. But Dyeus was not the only bright one. All the gods were so called, and the Hindu *deva*, the Latin *deus*, the Teutonic *tivar* are merely words for "the shining ones." Every time we say "deity" or "divine," we are, without knowing it, attributing brightness as the chief characteristic of godhead. Another word for God was something like Bhagha, which we now call "Bogie" or "Puck," using the term for spirits who are by no means bright. Thus do some words come to honour and some to dishonour. The reason is clear. When Christianity came it turned the pagan deities into fiends, just as Zoroastrianism turned the Devas, the Persian "shin-

ing ones," into "devils." Among those old "shining ones" are to be counted the sky, the dawn, the sun, the morning breeze, the storm wind, fire, and a host of others. Naturally such deities took their sex from their appearance or supposed character. The Sun is a male who pursues the fleeing female Dawn. The winds are male because, presumably, they bluster and rage. The light mists and fleecy clouds are nymphs, swan-maidens, valkyries. All the operations of the gods are literal. The sun-god shoots his gleaming arrows. The tempests are the contests of the gods of light and the powers of darkness. The overclouding of the sky is the temporary defeat of Dyeus and of the sun.

Moreover, it is clear that, from a state of mind like this, and by the aid of the imagination, which is so quick in barbarians, not one, but a multitude of accounts would arise and develop themselves into curiously varied myths. For instance, the sun is at one time a wanderer who is making for his home in the west, across the sea of heaven. This, in the Greek legend, becomes the myth of Ulysses making his way westward to Ithaca, at one time confined in the island of Calypso ("the concealer")—that is to say, hidden in a cloud; at another time narrowly escaping between the clashing rocks of the Symplegades—that is to say, through a rent in the cloud-banks; and yet again sailing serenely in the light Phæacian cloud-ships, till at last he reaches his long-lost home and his Penelope, the western twilight, who weaves and unweaves every day the parti-

coloured cloud-web of the sunset. Again, the sun is a deity who perpetually rolls a round stone to the summit of a hill, only to find it roll as perpetually down again ; and hence the story of Sisyphus, since it was only when the meaning of the tradition was forgotten, and when the idea of retribution in another world had been developed, that Sisyphus and his stone became a legend of the underworld instead of a legend of the sky. Yet once more he is a hero who, after many labours, dies in a blood-stained robe upon a western funeral pyre ; and hence the story of Heracles and the poisoned shirt of Nessus. And as in the Norse countries the sun is little seen, and his days are short or almost lacking in winter, one of the chief myths there centres upon the untimely death of Baldr, a beneficent deity, who was to the Scandinavian what Apollo was to the Greek, and whose name, Baldag, after all, means only the white god of day.

Now, suppose our original people to be widely expanded. Suppose its various offshoots to have found new homes very unlike those they had once inhabited. What do you think would be the effect on this mythology of theirs ? I said that the phenomena of nature are the material for all mythologies. True ; but according to the character of a race will be the character of the interpretation it puts upon these phenomena. The sensual Hottentot will make a differently-coloured set of myths to those of the reflective Semite. While the several branches were yet latent in the common stock, their myths were of

a uniform character; but a long interval of separation, in a new clime, amid new scenes, with the new habits and operations that result from new exigencies, always must affect the character and intellect as much as it evidently affects the physique. So it was with our sundered peoples. The Greek, "ever walking delicately through the most translucent air" of Hellas and sailing amid its gleaming Cyclades, takes one view of the bright heavens and the powers that are therein. The Scandinavian, amid his gloomy snow-capped mountains and sombre pine forests—the Hindu, in the hot and enervating plains below Himalaya—these take quite other views. To the Greek his winds are gentle, his sun is genial and cheering, his sky is serene, and in lapse of years his deities become graceful, dignified, chiefly marked by beauty. To the Scandinavian his winds are savage and furious, his sun is dull and short of life, his sky is mainly cloud. His gods, therefore, became awkward, violent, struggling perpetually with the Jötuns, those giant powers of mischief, and they are chiefly marked by strength. The Norse god is a drunkard, and Valhalla, the "hall of the chosen," is a place where departed heroes spend their time in drinking enormously of ale; but the Greek god drinks amicably of nectar, and the Indian god drinks soma, and, in short, every mythology makes its gods eat and drink and do whatever they would eat and drink and do if they were in a clime and in a civilization like those of their votaries.

The relative positions of the deities changed like-

wise. In Scandinavia the sky—that is to say, the unclouded sky—is of little account. He is not bright nor potent, and hence the old Dyeus, the Teutonic Tiu, falls into a lower place, and Wuodan, the active ever-present god of the storm-wind, whose coming was felt among the crashing pine-woods, becomes the chief god ; and next to him is Thor, the wielder of the thunderbolt. In Greece and Italy Dyeus remained supreme, but in India his fighting son Indra supplanted him, and naturally so, for the Hindus were men of war, and it must necessarily be a martial deity that took the first place with them.

There are, indeed, some other reasons for peculiar modifications of the mythology of some of the branches. "Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits," and, accordingly, the Wends and Germans, who remained near the original home, kept the ancestral nature-worship in a great measure unsophisticated ; but the Hindus and Persians, who had wandered far and met with other stocks, had been led, by finding that there were other religions, to look into their own, and so had modified their beliefs. The one branch chose Brahmanism, the other the more enlightened religion of Zarathustra. The Greeks, for their part, came down upon the peninsula and the islands, turned navigators, brightened their wits, and from their intercourse with the Phœnicians and Egyptians, they learned of new gods and new customs, to which they inclined with some favour, but to which their neighbours of Rome and their distant cousins of Norway and Britain had no counterpart. I might follow out

this line of argument and this line of fact in such a way, I think, as to make the cause of most of these divergencies clear to you ; but I must content myself, since this is but a lecture, with doing what all lecturers must be content to do—namely, with throwing out suggestions for you to follow up at your leisure. I have said what I proposed to say about our earliest ancestors in respect of their religious beliefs. I can perhaps do no better than conclude with a nature-myth of a barbarian people not far from ourselves, a myth of the Maoris, which, though more allegorical in appearance than those earliest myths of which I have spoken, will none the less prove that savages do really invent from the workings of the natural powers those legends which I have described. I condense the myth from the native story as told to Sir George Grey. "In the beginning Rangi and Papa (heaven and earth), the father and mother of all, were perpetually united, and their children were oppressed between their bodies ; but at length the children conspire to separate them. They all strive, but in vain, until Tanemahuta (the forest god) rises and thrusts Father Heaven up and away from the earth, so that there is room and light for all earth's offspring." In other words, there once was chaos of earth and the firmament until the trees of the forest, which the myth deifies, grew and thrust upward the vault of heaven. The other children were Tangaroa (the god of the sea and of fishes), Rongomatane (the deity representing cultivated food), Haumiatikitiki (the god of uncultivated food), and Tumatauenga (the god

representing human kind). The only son who sided with his father was Tawhirimatea. And who, do you suppose, is Tawhirimatea? He is the god and father of winds and storms, and it was but natural that the winds should follow the heaven. Thence he carries on war with his brothers. He fights the forest-god and the sea-god; that is to say, the storm lashes forest and sea. He fights the gods of food until Papa, the earth, conceals them for safety. And what, think you, is this but the winter season, when the crops are hidden, as it were, from the wintry storms? And so the storm-god triumphs over all but the god of mankind. He alone can withstand the storm, and because his brothers have proved such cowards, he, the god of mankind wages war upon the forest-god and the sea-god, and the gods of the crops—which simply means that man subdues all the elements and productions of nature to himself. And so the legend goes on, personifying everything, until it ends in this touching way:—"Up to this time the vast heaven has ever remained separated from his spouse, the earth. Yet their mutual love still continues; the soft, warm sighs of her loving bosom still ever rise to him, ascending from the woody mountains and valleys, and men call them mists; and the vast heaven, as he mourns through the long nights his separation from his beloved, drops frequent tears upon her bosom, and men seeing these term them dew-drops."

THE NATURE AND PROVINCE OF POETRY.

My subject is apparently so vast, and its nature so abstract, that you may wonder what I shall find to say concerning it, for it requires little experience to teach that, the wider the theme discussed, the less easy it is to say anything worth hearing about it. I may as well, therefore, clear the ground a little by stating what I do not intend to deal with. And, in the first place, I would have it understood that this is not a lecture of criticism. It does not aim at a comparison or judgment of individual poets, nor at increasing your familiarity with any of them, but at a statement of the purpose they all alike serve in human society, at a definition of the nature and requirements of their art and mission.

You will therefore have no opinion laid before you on the relative merits or the special excellences of Dante and Shakspere, Goethe and Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson; but some attempt will be made to discover what there is, besides versification, common to them all, in virtue of which they are called "poets."

Again, it would be unprofitable to roam over the spacious field of extant poetry in order to cull some choicest blossoms merely for the delight of the hour. I shall, therefore, make no selection of transcendent passages by way of quotation. This form of bouquet-gathering is, of course, good in season, whether it be for simple æsthetic pleasure or for that kind of botanizing study which is called criticism. But my object is different. I intend to ask you to listen to an attempt at explaining the nature and utility of poetry so far as I find them capable of demonstration, and I hope incidentally to help some of you to certain criteria for distinguishing the false poetry from the true.

In Shakspere's "As You Like It," the simple Audrey says to Touchstone, "I do not know what poetical is; is it honest in deed and word? is it a true thing?" Perhaps many of us are at the bottom in the same condition as the simple Audrey. Some of us do not know what poetical is, and not a few—including that high-souled philosopher Plato—have had grave doubts whether it is a "true thing." Let us understand what poetry ideally and genuinely is, and I believe that we shall find it to be one of the truest of things.

The word "poetry" is one of the commonest in use, and at the same time one of the most indefinite. We not only hear it applied to a form of literature, but also to mere sentiments and attitudes of mind. We hear, for instance, of this or that boasted agent of civilization "destroying all the poetry of life."

Sometimes a man who has never written a line of verse is said to be of a "poetical temperament," and yet we do not intend thereby at all to imply that he is capable of becoming a poet, as that word is generally understood. Again we speak of a painter filling his pictures with poetry, and we even hear of such a thing as the poetry of motion.

And when we come to deal with that form of literary composition to which the term is particularly applied, we meet with wide differences of opinion. Some persons, for instance, will call "Paradise Lost" a poem, while they emphatically refuse the title to the occasional verses, however good, of a magazine; others, on the contrary, will call all verses poetry, whether they be the "Iliad," the "Divine Comedy," the "Essay on Man," the "Ingoldsby Legends," or a nursery rhyme. This is not as it should be. The whole tendency, and the proper one, of modern speech is towards precision, towards making one word mean one thing, and that thing as specific as possible. But the word poetry is not specific, in that it does not convey to all persons the same idea or even very closely similar ideas. Let the conversation turn upon poetry, and one person will roundly aver that he never reads it, that he has no taste for it. Another is omnivorous; he reads what he calls poetry (but what he ought to call verse) indiscriminately, though he will admit that sometimes his reading gives him pleasure, while at other times he has the sense of performing a not very agreeable duty. And the true lover of true poetry who hears them

will feel that the word is being badly used, that the false is being confounded with, placed in equal honour with, the true. He will know that the legitimate poetry is being made to suffer for the faults of the illegitimate.

In ordinary language any composition in verse, no matter what its nature, is called a poem, though it is usual for the sake of a little more precision, to add an epithet; and we hear, for instance, of a comic poem or a society poem. According to this view, that sublime creation, "The Inferno," and a rhyming advertisement of soap are equally poems. Do you speakers of the English tongue think it right to encourage this laxity in your own speech? If I may be allowed to deliver a lay sermon on the abuse of language, I will ask you to treat the word with more respect—when you mean verse to say verse, and when you say poetry to mean something that deserves a special name. I am not about to propound any new theory, although thus desirous of combating an old error. There is an increasingly large number of persons in our own day who suppose—or whose indulgent friends suppose—that they can write poetry, because they have the faculty of stringing verses together, and because they can rhyme "moon" with "soon," and "beauty" with "duty," and so forth. Yet it is as easy and as worthless to produce this kind of pseudo-poetry as it is to produce a sort of pseudo-music by turning the handle of a hurdy-gurdy. Our language is copious, and ideas are to be borrowed in plenty. With this stock-in-trade the manufacture

of verse is easy, but not of poetry, for poetry, as I intend to show, demands exceptional faculties. Language can be taught, ideas can be lent, but sight cannot be given to the blind, and the true poet requires the penetrating eye as well as the speaking voice. Such persons I would endeavour to dissuade; I would exhort them to consider whether what they are doing is the best exercise of their abilities. There are too many who confound the fancy for a poetic reputation with the right to it, who mistake a certain verbal facility for genius. Let us make the proper distinction between verse and poetry, let us call our mistaken friend a versifier or a rhymer, perhaps a rhymester, let us deny him any ascription of the honourable name of poet, and I feel that he will be less infatuated with his delusion.

Critics like Fénélon, Coleridge, Carlyle, Emerson, and other authorities of greatness have laid down the principle that a work not in metre at all may be a poem, while many compositions in metre and rhyme have nothing of poetry about them. Walt Whitman is held by some to be a great poet, though he has no very evident metre; and, on the other hand, it is much discussed whether Pope was a poet at all.

In short, it has been maintained, and among people who exercise proper vigilance over their language it has been generally accepted, that poetry is not the opposite of prose, but of the matter-of-fact. It is, they rightly tell us, verse which is the antithesis of prose, and poetry may be either one or the other—either verse or prose—although in ordinary experience,

by a law of association which I shall hereafter try to explain, it is verse. In other words, poetry is not necessarily verse, and still less is verse necessarily poetry. Archbishop Whately, indeed, in his "Rhetoric," is on the other side; he defends the popular view. He says:—"Poetry is verse; it is not distinguished from prose by superior beauty of thought or expression, but is only a distinct kind of composition. Try the experiment of breaking up the metrical structure of a fine poem, and you will find it *inflated* and *bombastic* prose"—and here I will stop, though he adds much more to the same effect. I feel constrained to stubbornly deny that if the metrical structure of a true poem is broken up it becomes only inflated and bombastic prose. In the best poems of the best poets the words are never bombastic and inflated; they are simply the best, the most picturesque, the most vivid, the most forcible, the most imaginative; and if they were read in prose they would retain all these excellent qualities. Are the Psalms of David inflated and bombastic prose because their metrical structure is broken up in our translation? Take some of the finest passages of our most admirable prose writers—Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne, or our still living Ruskin—and you will find that their prose is exactly like a poem with the metrical structure broken up, their words are just such as would be and are used by poets—and he would indeed be a bold man who would say that they write a bombastic and inflated prose. The truth is, of course, that *their* prose is poetry—that

they are poets who differ from most poets in that they do not convey their lofty thoughts in formal metre.

So much and such excellent matter has been written on this subject by great masters, ancient and modern, that I must inevitably find myself now and again repeating what has been already far better expressed by one or other of them. But for that you will forgive me.

Poetry has, in brief, been rightly described as the opposite of the matter-of-fact, whether that manifest itself in the commonplace or in the scientific. Its most direct opposite is science; but though opposite the two are not antagonistic. Men and women are of opposite sexes; but they are not, I trust, therefore of antagonistic sexes also. Science has for its object the discovery, for practical purposes, of laws of facts. The scientist, as such, the philosopher, as such, is searching only for dry, hard, unimaginative morsels of measurable, weighable, analysable truth. We are here in a world of stubborn conditions, whose force we must recognize whether we like it or not. Science deals with these things as they are, literally, materially. Having arrived at its literal fact, science is satisfied. It wants no imaginative glamour thrown round its discovery.

I would not be understood to say that men of science lack imagination. On the contrary, the greatest scientists sometimes make the boldest flights of imagination, apparently more ambitious than those of poets. Imagination of a kind is a great

scientific instrument to discovery—*before* the discovery. We should scarcely have had a Newton, a Franklin, or a Darwin without this gift. But when his discovery has been made, the scientist regards no more than the literal fact. The poet is not contented with this. He represents that part of our humanity which yearns for something to beautify or temper this rigid positiveness, for something which the fact can teach or suggest of high and noble and comforting. The poet does not go contrary to scientific results or methods. He is only dissatisfied with them as mean and beggarly elements. As Emerson remarks, the man of science looks at a tree from the point of view of the utilitarian, who plans to make it produce more and more fruit. The matter-of-fact man looks upon the broad bosom of earth as suitable for building allotments or cabbage and strawberry gardens. What does the poet do? Perhaps he grows his apples and strawberries and fences his allotment like the other man, but he sees more in trees and plants than a promise of fruit, and more in a piece of mother earth than unearned increment. He looks at such things with a colouring, a warmth lent by imagination and emotion. Nature around him suggests trains of meditation, which arouse yet others, until he learns or seems to learn something useful for himself and for humanity.

A poet may be a man of as good practical common sense as another; he may be shrewd and sound in business; but he is not content with common sense, nor with business, nor with pieces of positive infor-

mation. He cannot live on dry bones. And why not? Is it because he is weaker than the other? No. It is because he has two sides to his mind, and the other has but one. He, as the poet puts it, "Feels that this cold, metallic motion is not all the life God fashions or reveals." He looks in all things for symbols, outshadowings of something deeper, something that comes home to himself and his fellow-men, and all the universe. Where the matter-of-fact man sees woods, mountains, streams, clouds, stars, the poet sees those same things, but he also sees in them images and suggestions of things higher and more abiding. They bring themselves into sympathy with him and his life. He fancies he hears in them tuneful voices warning him, teaching him, or consoling him. He feels that the "worldling intellect" of the scientist "*mis*-shapes the beauteous forms of things." And if you say that the scientist is not thus harsh and narrow, then it may be replied that, so far as he is not, he partakes of the higher nature of the poet; and fortunately almost all scientists do so partake. With the philosopher intellect is everything. By all means let us admire intellect; nevertheless, to all the best natures there is something harsh and loveless and dispi ting about mere intellect untempered by fancy, imagination, or the access of inexplicable unreasoning sentiment. I often think of the instance given by Keats—

> "There was an awful rainbow once, in heaven.
> We know her woof, her texture; she is given
> In the dull catalogue of common things."

Science has in a certain sense debased that rainbow. Science, helpful as it is materially, would, I am afraid, be debasing life if it were not for the check of poetry.

And is science all-truthful? Can science tell us all we want to know? Is its logic enough to satisfy all even of our intellectual wants? Our intellect is very finite. Can it comprehend the notion of infinity or eternity? Can an intellect convince us of immortality, or, on the other hand, disprove it? It is plain that here we fall back on something more impressive and convincing than mere intellect, and we find it in the imagination, the inspiration, and, as it were, the second-sight of the poet.

Do not think that the poet cannot see clearly what the man of science sees, and that he cannot recognize the force of circumstances and necessities. That is not the case. In the midst of his contemplations and ecstacies the poet knows too well that life is full of wants and disorders, and that scientific facts are not only useful but necessary. But while the mere scientist is seeking *only* for fact and its literal application, the poet is seeking for pleasure in it, beauty in it, sometimes prophecy in it. The scientist provides us with a chill bare truth, and the poet clothes it in radiance and beauty and honour.

Have you ever held to your ear one of those large spiral shells, and listened to the echoes murmuring within it? Explained as a fact, the cause is obvious. But do you cease to listen on that account, or do you rather delight to let your imagination loose to enjoy

the fancies that suggest themselves? Does it seem—do you like to fancy—that you hear in those far-reaching echoes a romantic tale of the depths of the sea; or do you remain unrelentingly conscious that a certain amount of air is mechanically vibrating in a receptacle thus and thus constituted? In the one case you have something of the poetic in you; in the other you are the one-sided slave of a fact.

Can you in any degree understand—feel—what Wordsworth meant when he spoke of the cataract "haunting him like a passion?" Or do you agree in the Philistine's remark that there is no wonder in Niagara running downwards, seeing that it cannot well run upwards? Does your knowledge that it is merely water obeying the laws of gravity prevent you from experiencing a sort of pain grow up in your minds, unintelligible yet undeniable?

In Plato we find a grand conception of an Eros, or passionate love, leading on the philosopher in search of truth. There is also an Eros or passion in poets which leads them to see in common things beauty and pathos and sympathy, where, to the common eye, even to the scientific eye, there is but a material body, plain and charmless. The poet finds sermons in stones, a spirit and a meaning in everything. He puts into every dumb thing a tongue, making it eloquent to sing or teach.

I despair of making the poet's mission much more manifest than this. It is a thing to feel rather than to demonstrate. Yet I may now do my best to meet the specific question, "What, then, is poetry?

Give us a definition, a portable value for the term." This is not so easy as it would appear. Great authorities have defined the word in their several ways, and equally great authorities refuse to accept their definitions.

Even poets themselves are not at one as to the principles of the art they practise. Mr. Swinburne does not think as Mr. Matthew Arnold, nor did Byron think as the poets of the Lakes. In our own day readers of periodical literature have heard Mr. Arnold maintaining that poetry must be full of high and earnest purpose, that it is "a criticism of life, and that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas of life—to the question how to live." And then Mr. Swinburne declares with exceeding vehemence that this view is entirely wrong, and that a man is a poet if he be richly endowed with imagination and harmony, while, on the other hand, he is no poet if he have all the other virtues and possess not these.

Well, when two such authorities are at feud on a subject which they may be expected best to understand, it might seem presumptuous for me here to talk of a definition, and when Mr. Swinburne still further proclaims that "the test of the highest poetry is that it eludes all tests," one might well feel dispirited in attempting to analyse qualities which he places above analysis. But you will, perhaps, agree with me that when you visit a gallery of pictures you can (if you are not yourself a painter with long-fostered idiosyncrasies and prejudices) recognize

several admirable styles of painting, and appreciate their several excellences. You can enjoy this realism, that idealism, yonder romanticism. Here you see chiefly a striving after a sublime conception, there a zeal of minute faithfulness in detail. And being one who loves pictures, you can find delight and instruction in them all, provided the execution be good of its kind.

And so I think it is with poetry. Laymen like ourselves can find delight in Byron, whom Matthew Arnold prefers, for Matthew Arnold's reasons; and we can find delight in Shelley, whom Swinburne prefers, for Swinburne's reasons; and I think that if we have read poetry widely and thoughtfully, if we have ears for a harmony, souls for a thought, education for a language, and sympathy for a subject, we may, after all, be in a very fair position to say what poets do for us, and what are the qualities which—variously found in the various masters of the art—make poetry a delight, a comfort, or an edification.

Consoled by this reflection, I shall venture to state the conclusion which I have accepted, after what I believe to be a thoughtful study of the best poets of such ages and countries as are accessible to me, and after much reading of criticisms by professed critics. Of all existing definitions I find myself most entirely in accord with that of Coleridge, whose admirable book, "Biographia Literaria," is, despite its unfortunate title, one of the absolutely fullest books in our tongue, and one to which I shall always acknowledge much indebtedness. If in some not very

important points we modify his definition, we arrive at this:—Poetry is that manner of writing in appropriate melody, but not necessarily in metrical verse, which is opposed to science, inasmuch as it seeks for its object not the ascertaining of material literal truth, but the imparting of either intellectual or spiritual delight, by means of language which comes rather spontaneously than voluntarily from a heart exalted and warmed, but within the limits of good sense. It is the product of great sensibility and imagination, and of exceptional sympathy with the objects and incidents which the poet contemplates; and it gives such a vivid reflection of the latent truths of Nature and of the soul as is beyond the power of science.

I trust it is now clear that poetry is opposed to science, not as its antagonist, but as its complement; it is opposed to the matter-of-fact because it ever throws out a tendril of sympathy to all it contemplates, because, in formal terms, it always combines the subjective with the objective.

So far is poetry from being regardless of common facts that many of our greatest poets have been among the most practical of men. Do not, I pray you, look upon the poet as a visionary, an idle, helpless enthusiast. Dante and Goethe bore their parts in public affairs. Shakspere was a practical citizen who looked after his business matters and prosecuted for his small debts even while writing "Lear" and "Othello." Byron drew the sword for Greek liberty. It is true that now-a-days we do dissociate poets from

practical affairs; but that is not because of any incapacity, but because the division of labour is growing more and more necessary. In modern times men become narrowed in their work, their classes and professions; and, accordingly, poets too are forming a class whose only work is poetry. Yet once poets worked and fought and wrote with equal aptitude. In ancient times men like Æschylus did doughty deeds in battle, and yet lost no virtue of their poetical faculty thereby. There is not—there cannot be—any reason why a man with the two components of a perfect brain should be inferior to him who possesses but one.

There is one question on which I feel very strongly. The idea is abroad, and it has been encouraged by writers of eminence—Macaulay among them—that poetry is on the wane—that it is a dying thing. Men point especially to the natural imagery which seems to distinguish the earliest literatures and the speech of the most uncivilized peoples, and they insist that, as civilization advances, poetry withers before it. I do not believe this fear to be a sound one, and I should like for a few moments to examine the data on which it is based.

And, first, I think those who speak in this way are labouring under the old confusion about poetry and verse. They see that all the beginnings of literature were in verse, that prose was of later birth, and that the proportion of prose continually increases out of all measure with that of verse. And they put this phenomenon down hastily—at any rate wrongly

—to the decline of the poetic element in mankind. But more verse by no means proves more poetry; nay, even the non-existence of verse would not prove more than a different conception of poetry. I think, though I admit that it is something of a digression, that it might be useful for me to explain why verse was the natural form for the earliest literature to take. We are apt now-a-days to think verse the more sophisticated form of composition, while, as a matter of fact, the contrary is the truth. The *poietes*, the "maker"—what the old Teutons called the "song-smith" and Pindar called the "builder of hymns"—found it far easier both to make and to spread a literature of verse than one of prose. We imagine that, as we think prose and talk prose, so it would be natural for a man in a society of least culture to compose prose and not verse. And yet the oldest work of Greek literature is an epic poem, and it was only as the people grew more and more in learning and art that prose writing began to flourish at the expense of verse. So it is in old French, German, Anglo-Saxon. There are two very satisfactory reasons for the priority of the metrical form.

The first reason is, that whenever a literature first begins there are none who read, and few who would be attracted by a recitation without cadence or jingle. Men in nascent civilizations have not learned to go to books for their knowledge; they have not even learned their letters—perhaps writing is almost unknown. They want to be sung to; but they do not want—they do not even know what it is—to be read

to. They require something grateful to the ear, easy to remember. And to this end verse, and not prose, is suited. Of prose, men can carry away but little; it is addressed solely to the mind, without any assistance from the ear, and so it makes for itself no lasting abode in the brain. We all remember, as Emerson reminds us, medleys of old saws and proverbs —perhaps with little or nothing striking in the thought—but which, being expressed in a sort of cadence and rhyme, cling to the memory far more enduringly than the most polished and pregnant sentences of prose. We remember, "Thirty days hath September," simply because of the jingle. Most of us recall strangely, and as if by accident, at odd moments, little snatches of nursery rhymes, little burdens of ballads, which we have not heard since childhood; while the same memory, so spontaneous in these respects, cannot be forced to retain even for a few days the shortest passage of prose.

So in those early days, when books were few or none, when the very materials for their production were almost unobtainable, the only way whereby a literary work could be diffused was by the old delightful plan of recitation or singing. In Greece the rhapsodists carried from town to town the verses of Homer stored in their memory, and these they sang or recited, after a prelude on the harp, to crowds of eager listeners.

This can only be done with verse. To lay aside the harp, to speak like a mere ordinary man, without rhyme or metre, would be to awaken no interest, to

gratify neither ears nor fancy. Let anyone commit to memory, on the one hand, a large portion of "Paradise Lost," and, on the other, the most eloquent speech of Burke; and after some attempts to deliver each, examine which of the two he finds it easier to remember, more grateful to utter, more alluring to the hearer. This experience is universal. As among the Greeks we find the wandering rhapsodists, so in Iceland do we find the skalds, in France the troubadours and jongleurs, in Germany the minne-sänger, and in Celtic countries the bard.

All literatures begin alike. A series of verses committed to memory, often recited, and widely spread. Then an attempt to reduce them to writing for the sake of preservation by a reading few; then a demand for books, so more readers; and when once men are readers, they like to read even things which they do not care to hear recited; and so arises prose.

There is another reason why verse precedes prose. It is easier to compose. In ballad verse the writer may be abrupt in expression, he need care less about arrangement, he may even be somewhat lax in diction. Prose, on the other hand, must be reasoned and compact. We, who are accustomed to write English prose from our childhood, know how difficult it is to arrange our words so as to be clear and precise and forcible; and some, after abundant efforts, prove unable to master the art. Yet, if we have some taste, and an ear for rhythm, we require no such study in order to express ourselves adequately in a kind of verse. There is no temptation in verse to be prolix,

to make long and confused sentences, parenthesis within parenthesis.

I am anxious not to weary you with this discussion ; but when it is held that the ancients were more poetical than the moderns because of their abundant verse and little prose, I, who much admire, and in a sense professionally belong to, the ancients, think I see that view to be a fallacy.

Well, but, the supporter of this opinion says, surely it is a fact that in primitive communities, when civilization is in its infancy, imagination is stronger than reasoning power, and the symbolic and figurative utterance comes more naturally than the literal and logical. Trade, physical science, and the other material advances of society, tend to make us less sensible to movements of imagination and fancy than our forefathers were. The savage, he will say, is always poetical, and though he does not indeed use the mechanical contrivances of metre and rhyme, poetry does not depend on these. He is full of metaphor and simile and fanciful turns of expression. He illuminates his speech by means of flashes which we should think almost inspired.

Perhaps it is not unnatural that our friend should say this ; that he should think our modern atmosphere of logic and science uncongenial to poetry. It appears very reasonable to suppose that as ideas are more and more formulated, as the processes of reason are more and more reduced to method, in so much is the imagination more and more suppressed. It seems as if minds educated, especially in the mathematics and in

natural and mental science, now have too keen an insight into logical sequence, too abiding a consciousness of the real, to wander off unfettered in the flights of fancy. This is a very strong line of argument, and some authorities, Macaulay I have already mentioned, are much impressed by it. But I believe that our imaginations are not suppressed, that they are only differently directed. Scientific practicality is indeed something like a shrivelling and despiteful frost. But some plants, I am told, such as the vine, cannot thrive well without frost. The frost does them good, and is almost essential to the true bearing of fruit. The frost is an unpleasant thing in itself—and so is scientific practicality—but it may be good in its effect.

Are we to believe that poetry will decay? Are we to believe the time is coming when the muses will be from the world "with sighing sent?" Is the world in this respect at least to become more coarse and vulgar because of the progress of knowledge? If it is, I for one feel ready to cry out with Wordsworth—

> "Good God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
> So might I, standing on the pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that should make me less forlorn"

than such a world as that would make me. It is impossible, with only Wordsworth and Tennyson before us in these later days, to believe that the divine afflatus is breathing less strongly upon men.

To put the matter on the very lowest ground, it is certain that the human feelings and sentiments are

superior to all philosophy, and will ever find expression for themselves, independently of cold reason, in such terms as their intensity and the imagination may suggest. The instinctive part of the mind will ever and again rebel against the domination of the intellectual part. I think it is Renan who says that as a man becomes more and more developed in intellect, the more strongly he is attracted to the opposite, and that he finds rest and refreshment in the childlike, impulsive artlessness of nature. The brain, he says, grows arid with reasoning. "Arid!" Yes, that seems to be the word. It suggests a thirst for the sweet dews of simplicity and fancy, and these are the moistures on which poetry thrives.

But this is the lower ground. There is a far higher reason for an optimistic view. When we are told that poetry must necessarily decay, and mere verses take its place, we need not be alarmed. Rather, with Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold, we may anticipate an even more glorious poetical future. For it seems to me that in our own day the gaze of contemplation, the looking before and after, the deep communings of the spirit with the mysteries of life and nature, all of these are growing more and more intense. We shall not, perhaps, produce simple and childlike poems of romance and narrative—Iliads, Odysseys, Æneids, Canterbury Tales, Faerie Queenes —but we shall have something which better befits the time. After all, every great poet owes the character of his work to his surroundings rather than to himself. He generally comes when he is most wanted to

give expression, not to ideas absolutely his own, but to those questions, yearnings, aspirations which the time-spirit is stirring all around him. Most of you may have seen a chemical solution full of hazy, indefinite particles floating loosely, and then you have seen some new element infused which at once resolves them into a precipitate, something distinct and recognizable. It is very much the same with the great poets. The world of their time is full of vague thoughts and feelings floating in solution, till suddenly there comes the man with the precipitating quality, the giver of form and distinctness, and the world is enriched with the clear expression of a clear idea.

Look at the great continent of the New World, with its territorial vastness, its mighty mountains and forests, and suggestions of freedom ; its new ways of looking at men and things. It is plain that a new poetry is growing up there, the poetry of nature, and of equality, which is akin to nature, being the state of man as nature intended him. The old aristocratic poetry of "lords and ladies gay" and "haughty feats of arms," is dying, perhaps. But the poetry of modern humanity is only being born. We have abundance of nebulous ideas still in solution, and we always shall have, till human life, its institutions and its beliefs, are all perfect ; till nature has yielded up her last secret to science ; till the heavens above and and the earth beneath can be read like a printed book ; till man has no doubts, or fears, or hopes. And if poetry does not die till then, we may look far enough yet for its decease.

But, as I have said, though poetry will not die out until man becomes a machine, yet the conception of poetry in ages hereafter will be ever changing. Man's imaginative part will not be suppressed, but will turn with new powers into new ways. This observation is justified by the history of the past. It has been frequently noted that the two most engrossing themes of our modern poets were almost untouched by the ancients. The one is the poetry of nature, of nature the beautiful or the mysterious. Homer and Virgil offer us no loving descriptions of, far less any meditations upon, natural beauties, loved for their own sake, such as meet us in Wordsworth. They do not find their hearts going out to glowing sunsets or sunrises; they give voice to no ardent sensations aroused by the stilly night, the storm, the breath of flowers. They simply say, "The sun set, and all the ways were dark;" "There was a valley dark with the shade of pines;" "The dawn with rosy fingers appeared." They speak of the "hoary" or the "purple" sea, or even of its "unnumerable laughter;" and these touches are left to suggest whatever more the reader may desire. But the modern poet fills in the sketch—he is enamoured of that which the other scarcely observes. To an ancient poet a primrose was a primrose, and it was nothing more; a waterfall was just a waterfall. It, of course, pleased his eye, perhaps as much as ours; but there was nothing to reach his emotions or call for ardent expression. He was not haunted as by a passion. I do not think he would have comprehended a longing aroused by the inanimate.

The second main point wherein modern poetry differs from the ancient lies in the greater study of self—introspection, it is called. The ancient poet kept himself in the background; but the modern poet, I have seen or heard it somewhere said, is ever seeking to "unravel the tangles of his own spirit," sounding the depths of the conflicting currents of feeling. This self-probing was not performed by any Greek, Roman, or even mediæval poet. In Homer and Virgil the descriptions of moods and passions are very superficial. It is quite enough for them that "anger grows hot" or "sorrow gnaws the soul." To them joy makes a man dance, love scorches his heart—so much and nothing more. I cannot conceive of any Greek or Roman writer examining himself in the modern manner.

Thus has poetry changed in recorded times, and so it will change in the future. One of my most firm beliefs is in the ultimate refining and perfecting of the human race, and, therefore, in the expansion of the human faculties; and I believe that the efforts of poets to "communicate the incommunicable" will be crowned with much success, inasmuch as the incommunicable will grow ever less and less.

But, you may ask, what is the mark of the true poet? How are we, in the mass of professed poetry and the multitude of professed poets, with their various faults or excellences, to distinguish poetry from verse?

There is more cant talked about poetry than about anything else, except perhaps what is known as art.

Few people judge for themselves. The great majority prefer to take their criticisms on trust. It is thought a confession of incompetence to dislike this or that part of Shakspere or Milton; yet can you always honestly say that you agree with the traditional verdict? Generally a candid opinion is suppressed, because the reader is afraid to disagree with the majority and the constituted authorities, because he distrusts himself. Some poets love more the sublime, some love more the beautiful. Because you delight in Milton, it follows not that you will equally delight in Keats.

An ancient poet, Pindar, says that he writes words that have "voice for them that understand." Likes are known by likes. A reader must have an intellect and a soul not unlike that of the poet. It requires strong flight to follow the eagle, a delicate ear to distinguish the songbird's tune. Poets must be deeply studied, and there are readers who must expect to fail to appreciate the highest forms of poetry; but he must indeed be a hopeless, soulless clod to whom all poetry alike is void of charm, who has no little vein, no tiniest spark of the poetic in his nature.

Well, but can we, despite Mr. Swinburne, analyze the various excellences of poetry? I think we can do so fairly well. We may note one special strength in one poet, another in another. The ideal poet, the hitherto unrealized, though almost reached in Shakspere, would combine many distinguishable virtues and talents. For instance, just as at Rome

an orator was defined as a "good man, skilled in speaking," so it was said in Greece that it was impossible for a man to be a good poet unless he was first a good—not a "goody"— man. No truly mean, black-hearted being can be a poet.

Besides this moral qualification, on which you will not require me to dwell, I may enumerate briefly the evident qualities and gifts which the best poets must possess. And first of all is the quality of good sense. Though Aristotle says that "no real genius was ever without some mixture of madness, and nothing grand or sublime can be spoken except by the agitated soul," yet that mixture of madness must be only enough to promote excitement, ardour, and sensibility, not to cloud reason. If the poet has a *Trunkenheit ohne Wein*, it must be an intoxication which comes upon him after his good sense has directed him to, and given him a hold upon, his subject. I sometimes think that some of our would-be poets of the lachrymose school are particularly remarkable for a lack of this good sense. They affect "world-pains" and "philosophies of despair." But Chaucer and Shakspere were especially the poets of good sense, and they were eminently cheerful. Sometimes, too, I think that Wordsworth's good sense failed him when he chose the most trivial, infantile themes for his verse, for good sense teaches that no puerile subject can be made poetical. And in the matter of expression the writers of the Queen Anne time sinned against good sense, when, as Mr. Gosse playfully reminds us,

they called all women "nymphs," and the caterpillar "the crawling scourge that smites the leafy plain," and so forth. This was not good sense, but nonsense. This, too, is a matter on which I need not dwell.

The second quality of the poet is earnestness and inspiration. Whatever be his message, glad, merry, or prophetic, he must mean what he says; he must be constrained to give vent to thoughts that swell in his breast. This is inspiration, to have that within you which must come forth of you. The old world, as you may find in Carlyle, gave the same name to poets as to prophets; and in modern days, perhaps, the true poet is the successor of the prophets. The poet must feel the prophetic impulse, a spontaneous abandonment. Emerson gives us an essay on inspiration, which I shall use as common property, since it is impossible to add to it.

> "'Tis not every day that I
> Fitted am to prophesy,"

says Herrick; and so Byron declares that without an *estro* or afflatus his pen was powerless. There are days on which the poet must not write. According to Plato, if the letters called by his name are really his, "A light as if leaping from a fire will all on a sudden be kindled in the soul." This is what we call poetic inspiration, what the ancients called the divine afflatus or the access of the Muse; and it is these occasions only which call forth poetry. Emerson tells us of a remark made to him by a religious poet, that "he valued his poems not

because they were his, but because they were not." There is a deep truth in this.

Then, again, the poet must have genius. He must be capable of energy without effort, of spontaneous originality, of fancy and imagination. He must be able to lend novelty to old and familiar objects and incidents. He must be able to "make the common marvellous." Mere love of Nature cannot make a poet, nor can mere depth of feeling. He must possess that power which can grasp and depict the inmost essences of things. There must be no faintness and blur about his conceptions; no half sights. His imagery must be powerful, and at the same time must grow upon him from the subject itself.

And to express all this he requires another great gift—the gift of language. If he can merely describe he is no poet. He must describe vividly, briefly, suggestively, yet completely. His language is of that *timbre* which the subject requires. While striving to be brief, the poet is not obscure; while striving for grandeur, he is not bombastic. And this necessary verbal power only comes by pains and study. It is often said that "a full heart, brimful of one noble passion," is sure to find words fit for its expression. I am not convinced of that, for experience teaches the contrary. Language requires either a transcendent gift or abundant study.

Poetry does not depend on rhymes and cadence and compound epithets. The test of the language of poetry lies in this, that every single word is

essential, either for the ear, or the intellect, or the emotion ; that it brings new strength, or tenderness, or pathos. And this excellence of language must be maintained. Splendid lines here and there, gaudy trimmings and purple patches, do not make a poem beautiful or immortal. No word must be weak, faint, unnecessary, coarse, or low. Nay, further, Coleridge's schoolmaster was right when he taught that "in the truly great poets there was a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word."

As the poets imagine in stronger and clearer lights, so their language must shed stronger and clearer lights. Look at the word-painting in Keats ; the old analogue between poem and picture is for ever illustrated in him. But the greatest masters of those bold completely satisfying strokes which mark the supreme painter were Dante and Shakspere. Their few words of description leave absolutely nothing to be desired. What is called Dantesque may be explained by the instance in the "Inferno" of that persistent, noiseless, measureless rain of flame which

"Fell like broad snowflakes when the wind is still."

What more could a thousand words do? One of Shakspere's greatest powers lies in this capacity to utter with no more and no less the very essence of his thought.

Moral goodness, good sense, inspiration, genius, language, these are a formidable catalogue of require-

ments. But there is yet another, which I have kept till the last, because, though I feel it is equally essential with these, I none the less feel that its reason is less obvious, and that it may seem comparatively trivial. A poet must have melody, sweetly or richly cadenced and musical words, tones which will delight the ear and cling to the memory. I anticipate the question "Why?" Why should our highest and most spiritual thoughts be best conveyed in verse? What necessary connection exists between an elevated mood and a harmonious expression? Why should a thought conceived by inspired imagination necessarily take birth in rhyme and melody instead of in the ordinary language of prose? We know that such is the case, that as soon as a man begins to rise above the commonplace, so soon his style begins to take on itself a rhythmic shape; his words are not satisfied to string themselves together in their work-a-day manner; words less trite and debased, more noble and sonorous, offer themselves as if by some law of nature, and those words arrange themselves in a more sweet and musical order. Try the experiment. Take up a specimen of prose eloquence by some master of our tongue. So long as the subject is common, poor, matter-of-fact, the sentences are without charm or melody. But when the speaker rises to a subject calling for fire or pathos, then, without conscious effort or volition, his expression grows richer in sound, more delicate and harmonious in construction. It is always so. There is much truth in those who contend that there is a

deep-laid connection between sound and thought. A great literary critic somewhere compares the expression "Patience is a virtue," with the expression "For an enduring heart have the gods given unto the children of men." He does not explain the difference. Let us avail ourselves of that instance. Who ever feels himself exalted, his feelings moved, or even his attention arrested by the phrase "Patience is a virtue"? No one. And why? Not because it is not a truth, but because it is a truth expressed in a manner that regards not the accordant language and rhythm. It is a hard, matter-of-fact assertion, the offspring of a cold, self-possessed thought. But "For an enduring heart have the gods given unto the children of men" contains, besides the unwonted diction (which I admit gives much charm), a rhythmic motion, a moving concurrence of sounds, which all who hear must feel. And it gets that rhythm because the man who utters it is not speaking in his everyday character, from his everyday feelings, but he is in a state of exaltation, and his thought clothes itself correspondingly in words of exalted sound.

Now, all writing which is truly called poetry is produced under a state of excitement; the writer is carried out of himself. It follows, therefore, from this mysterious connection, this indefinable sympathy between the spoken sound and the conceiving mood, that all poetical utterance is harmonious, and most naturally takes the form of sweet or solemn verse.

Let us take another instance. You remember Wordsworth's

> "Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
> His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

Here is a beautiful thought in beautiful expression; and what I contend is that the unspeakable music of this verse—for I find it such—could never have been produced by a mere act of artistic volition; and that, on the other hand, it almost naturally produces itself from the sweet beauty of the thought. A man could not sit down in cold blood and write like that. He might resolve to compose lines of the most melodious possible sound, but he could not succeed like that, unless his thought, his mood, were *attuned* to harmonious utterance. Perhaps some of you may think that in the lines just quoted the sense is over simple—that, after all, the beauty lies in the sound, and that therefore there is something of an illusion here. Yet who but a poet could feel the voiceless teaching of woods and rills, the lesson which speaks in the vast ineffable silence of the stars? One can imagine a Wordsworth on a windless, noiseless night gazing with poetic yearning into the great starry dome, until its silence grew upon him, and filled him with a great calm or a great pain of heart. We can imagine him then uttering his thought in words which seem expressly made to give to his feeling an audible sound of the truest note. But, on the other hand, when Wordsworth talks of pedlars, and black-

thorns, and other unpoetic themes, his verse is no richer, no more melodious, than the prose of his guide-book to the lakes.

And if the music of verse is the fit utterance for impassioned thought, it is equally the best instrument for inducing the proper mood in the reader or hearer. If the poet's raptures, visions, fancies, enthusiasms were set before us in formal prose, we should not feel our souls equally disposed to receive them. Our souls want thawing. We all know what it is to have our mood suddenly and entirely changed by the chance hearing of a piece of music. A gleeful air will exhilarate the depressed soul; the "Dead March" will sadden the most frivolous. That is why we have military bands to inspire our troops and great organs to aid our devotions. The Greeks had the Dorian mood to inspire courage and endurance, the Lydian disposed to mourning, and the Phrygian to a kind of sensual frenzy. Those acquainted with natural phenomena know how, when sand is scattered loosely on a layer placed upon a glass, and the strings of a violin are played above it, the sand will arrange itself into symmetrical shapes; so is it with the human soul. There is something of the sort in buildings. Rich carvings, paintings, window-stainings are not without their attuning purpose or effect. It is so with the melody of verse. Turn your ear from common prose to the full organ-peal of Milton's verse, and your whole disposition is altered; you are prepared to receive impressions; you are teachable; your soul opens its pores to drink in the refreshing moistures.

I have dwelt upon this point because I have heard many persons speak of this effect of rhythm as illusory. On the contrary, I think it very real. Leave a funeral oration in prose, however eloquent, and take up the poetic plaint of Lycidas—

> "For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime.
> Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
> Who would not sing for Lycidas?"

or Shelley's—

> "I weep for Adonais—he is dead,"

and I am convinced that the mournful melody of these poems will draw a tear from you, where all the truth and strength of the funeral oration may fail.

These, then, are the true qualities of the true poet. Milton sums them up in the sentence that the poet must be "simple, sensuous, and passionate." In other words, he must have a sensitive faculty of language, a sensitive eye and ear, a sensitive heart.

What is the province of poetry? It is like that of every liberal art. It is to serve as the salt and leaven of life, to refresh us when we grow weary with outward shows, and harsh, positive facts; to raise us above pounds, shillings, and pence; to keep alive our better part; and, in order that I may end with words more impressive than any of my own, I will say that it "opens our eyes to the loveliness and wonder of the world around us—an inexhaustible treasure; but for which, because of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes that see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand."

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND EDUCATION.

THE subject of this address is not a novel one. Essayists have written upon it, and educationists have wrangled about it, with abundant zeal, during the last quarter of a century. May I ask you to be satisfied if I simply endeavour to re-state the case, as it appears to me, in an intelligible and dispassionate form? A lecturer's duty is to make himself familiar with the region under survey, and then to guide his hearers round to the best points of view, as far as the time admits, without overmuch of the cicerone's garrulity.

Some of you may anticipate rather a one-sided presentment of this question to-night. My own position is that of the student of letters, and you may fear that you are about to hear a eulogy of literature and a disparagement of the educational value of science, at some sacrifice of the exact truth. I shall be much disappointed, I shall feel that I have entirely failed in my purpose, if you part from me under the impression that you have been listening to an antagonist of scientific teaching. Science, in the

popular sense of the term, cannot but have an immense attraction, cannot but convey most profitable suggestion, even to the man who is no professed scientist. Thoughts are interlinked with thoughts, studies with studies, in such a mutually helpful way that the man of letters can scarcely meet with any new scientific conclusion or new scientific theory without finding it of service to some inquiry which his mind is pursuing in its own speculative fields. The student, whether of science or letters, is only a true student in so far as he resolves, in singleness of heart, to see things as they are; and if any man starts with and adheres to the presumption that his studies are the only worthy studies, and the rest comparatively contemptible, he is no true student desiring to see things as they are. We shall not, then, entertain any such presumption, but shall endeavour to examine the respective claims of science and literature, to see how many each possesses of those elements which make up the complete education of a human being, and in what relative proportions they possess them. This will give us our premises; the conclusion will be easy to deduce.

We must begin, however, with an understanding as to what the terms literature and science imply. In their widest senses they are not reciprocally exclusive; there is a sort of literature of science, and literature itself, if properly pursued, is one of the sciences. Cicero, ages ago, observed :—"All the arts which appertain to humanity have a certain common bond," and in "arts" he included studies. The more

one reads and thinks, and realizes the profoundness of his own ignorance—as we all do realize it more and more every day—the more he recognizes the reality of this common bond. Among the wise sayings in Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" there is none wiser than this—"And generally let this be a rule, that all partitions of knowledge be accepted rather for lines and veins than for sections and separations." Studies interpenetrate each other, throw light on each other at more and more points. Biology, for instance, is a branch of science, history is a branch of literature, the comparative study of languages partakes of both literature and science. Now, note the connecting links. Biology examines the conditions of life and the development of the physical man; it seeks to tell us what he has been and how he came to be what he is. History examines the growth of his political, social, and moral ideas; it tells us how the communities and relations of man came to be what they are. The comparative study of languages inquires into the development of his power of expression, and therewith shows the unfolding and the subtilizing of his conceptions. Roughly speaking, the three studies deal with man as an animal, man as a member of society, man as a mind. Here is the common bond.

But the past of man suggests the past of the world, or geology, and this carries us out again to astronomy, and so these vast subjects, these boundless regions of reasoning and speculation, keep opening out in vista after vista before our unsatisfied

intellects. The man of letters feels this as profoundly as any man of science. He rejoices to add to the alembic of his mind some great scientific fact, and leave it there to find its relation to the ideas which are already amalgamating within him. "There is," says Mr. Hamerton, "a sort of intellectual chemistry. We cannot learn any new thing without changing our whole intellectual composition, as a chemical compound is changed by a new ingredient."

This interconnection of studies compels some important reflections. It shows, for instance, that it is only a narrow, short-sighted mind which will denounce unfamiliar studies as useless and aimless. It makes it probable again that it is well for everybody in early life to learn many things for which he then displays no particular aptitude; and it leads one to feel how dangerous it is for governments and ruling powers, taking empirical views of education, to subsidize and coddle some pet branch of learning to the certain neglect of those less favoured.

But though the division between studies is, as Bacon puts it, only "a vein" and not "a section," we do in use make a complete severance of literature from science, and for the purposes of this lecture I shall accept the distinction. Unfortunately our nomenclature is not fixed, and, if it be fixed, the fixture must be arbitrary. Science properly means knowledge; and that plainly is a term which no field of learning should arrogate to itself. And if it is to mean those branches of study in which know-

ledge is obtained by systematic methods, by observing, experimenting, classifying, drawing conclusions, it is once more plain that all this can be done in things of the mind as well as in natural phenomena; and so we hear of mental and moral science. In popular parlance, however, science means natural and physical science, nature-knowledge; and it is with the educational value of science in this sense that I shall deal—a study limited in its scope to the investigation of nature, that is to say, of the properties of existing things which nature produces, and the operations which nature displays.

Literature, too, does not mean the same to all men. Carlyle, for instance, says that "literature is the thought of thinking souls." Charles Lamb calls such books as Adam Smith's, not literature, but "things in books' clothing." Mr. Stopford Brooke has it that "by literature we mean the written thoughts and feelings of intelligent men and women arranged in a way which will give pleasure to the reader." But whatever meanings are attached to the term by others, I shall not regard it as, on the one hand, extensive enough to include all written books; nor, as on the other, narrow enough to mean merely *belles lettres*. But I shall mean the collection of writings which, without having for their main object the examination or teaching of scientific or technical matters, are nevertheless writings with a worthy, an elevating, or an instructive purpose, and writings in which there is intentionally

studied the art of powerful, beautiful, and lucid expression.

With this understanding let us proceed to compare the results for education which will flow from true study, on the one side of the material works of nature, on the other of the written works of the mind of man.

What do we mean by education? It is one of the commonest of words, but the thing is most rarely understood. Yet, until we know quite precisely what we mean by educating, we cannot possibly know how we are to set about it in the right way. "Education," says Plato, "is the first and fairest thing the best of men can ever have." And, again, "there is nothing more divine about which a man can take counsel than about the training of himself and of those who belong to him." I suppose there is not a person present who does not grant the truth of these maxims. But let us ask, with that eminent scientist Professor Huxley, "What is education? Above all things, what is our ideal of a thoroughly liberal education? Of that education which, if we could begin life again, we would give ourselves?" Huxley himself answers by comparing life to a game of chess. "The life, the fortunes, and the happiness of every one of us, and more or less of those connected with us, depend on our knowing something of the rules of the game. The chessboard is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of nature. . . . Education is

learning the rules of the mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of nature, under which name I include, not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways, and the fashioning of the affections and the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws." I shall not unduly criticise this similitude. I shall abstain from pointing out how very small a part of playing chess is the learning of its rules. I shall merely hint that you might know all the chess rules by heart and yet be beaten every time you sat down to play. But I particularly ask you to observe that under the laws of nature Professor Huxley includes men and their ways ; for I mean to claim that to the successful conduct of the chess-game of life there contributes more largely the knowledge of men and their ways than the knowledge of external nature and its forces.

Education is the training of a human being to live the highest, most useful, and happiest life which humanity allows. It should bring out what is good in him, correct what is bad in him, and encourage in him those powers which he lacks. Information is not education. A man may know encyclopædias through from beginning to end and not be educated. The world is waking up to this truth. In old-fashioned schools the material of so-called education consisted of three objects—a book, a boy, and a cane. The whole problem of the instructor was to make the cane force the book into the boy. We no longer believe in this Dr. Busby form of instruction. We demand

teaching. We demand that a boy or girl shall be looked upon as a developing organism, not as an empty vessel which requires forcible filling. The first quality, therefore, that we demand in any educational method or scheme, is that it should plainly work toward the perfecting of character and capacity. Good old Locke urges—"That which I cannot too often inculcate is that whatever the matter be about which it is conversant, whether great or small, the main (I had almost said only) thing to be considered in every action of a child is what influence it will have upon his mind; what habit it tends to, and is likely to settle in him; how it will become him when he is bigger." You must pardon me for insisting upon this vitally essential point. We find around us too great a faith in the knowledge of facts and material processes. The air is filled with cries that our education should be "technical." The State encourages the cry, forgetting apparently that in so far as the State looks after education it should look after it, not as a training of spring chickens for the market, but as a training of future citizens for the art of citizenship. This was the argument for compulsory education, and I venture to think it is the only safe principle for legislative direction of the same.

An old Greek philosopher, when asked what a boy should be taught, replied, like Locke, by the question, "What will he need to know when he is a man?" There is more in the remark than appears on the surface. He did not mean that if a boy was to be a

physician he must learn medicine, or that if he was to be a lawyer he must learn law. Any dunce would know as much as that. But he recognized that the boy would have the life, the duties, and the pleasures of a man as well as those of a lawyer or physician, and that that life, those duties, and those pleasures required a liberal training and apprenticeship. Hear Rousseau: "Let one destine my pupil to the army, the church, the bar, what does it matter? Before parents have decided on a vocation, nature has called him to human life; living is the trade I want to teach him."

In these days of industrial struggle we are always forgetting that we are in life in order to live. In our zeal of "getting on," we seem to be in the condition of King Pyrrhus. Cineas asked him what he would do when he had conquered Italy. "I will conquer Sicily." "And then?" "Then I will conquer Africa." "And after you have conquered the world?" "Then I will take my ease and be merry." Then said Cineas, "Why can you not take your ease and be merry now?" And when Wordsworth was describing to Hannah More how he spent the day in doing this and writing that, the old lady sharply inquired, "And when dost thee *think*, friend?" So one might be disposed to inquire of our toiling, moiling men of riches, who toil and moil for more, "And when dost thee *live*, friend?" No one would be so foolish as to disparage manly work and rational effort, but one may be excused for believing that work and wealth are after all only

means to an end, and that end is the best use and enjoyment of life, together with the diffusion of the best influence. "Nature herself," says Aristotle, "requires that we should not only be able to work well, but also to use leisure well," and "business should be chosen for the sake of leisure, and things necessary and useful for the sake of the beautiful in conduct."

If this is true, as it cannot but be true, education which aims only at teaching what is required for a trade or profession is no education; it must aim at teaching what is required for life and citizenship. Outside his work every man acts on his neighbours as a unit of society, and on himself as a spiritual being. Education must develop the faculties and furnish the resources which both these relations require. And what will these faculties be? and what these resources? Well, "the first and fairest thing the best of men can ever have," as a complete and perfect member of civilization, is the power and habit of looking at things as they are, on all sides, clearly, without prejudice or passion, not deluding himself or others as to those things and their consequences, avoiding above all deadly things "the lie that sinketh in"—in other words, the power and habit of thinking straight, and the power and habit of acting straight.

Plato explains how in the nature of man there are three elements—the concupiscent, the passionate, and the reasoning; and how by education they must be brought into subjection—the first to temperance, the second to courage, the third to wisdom.

> "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
> These three alone lead life to sovereign power;
> Yet not for power (Power of herself
> Would come uncalled for), but to live by law,
> Acting the law we live by without fear."

None of these powers and habits can be fully possessed from nature alone.

Now these, you may say, are generalities; let us come to particulars. When Bacon dedicates his "Advancement of Learning" to King James, he commends "the largeness of your capacity, the faithfulness of your memory, the swiftness of your apprehension, the penetration of your judgment, the facility and order of your elocution." What Bacon says is generally the most satisfying of its kind, and I could wish no better description of the intellectual part of the educated man than this of large capacity, swift apprehension, penetrating judgment, and lucid expression. Especially communicable by training is swiftness of apprehension. Nothing is more characteristic of the educated man than the readiness with which he grasps your meaning, anticipates the bearing of your argument and its corollaries. He is to the uncultured what a conductor of electricity is to a non-conductor. Bring him into contact with the pole of a thought, and its full significance flashes instantaneously through him. Or he is what a creature with antennæ or feelers is to one without them. He has a feeling of a thing as he approaches it or it approaches him; while the uncultured and antennæless only feel it when they come into perhaps severe collision with it. And he will impart as

easily as receive. How often do you meet somebody who struggles laboriously to unfold to you some conception, some sentiment, which he thinks to be novel and incommunicable, while you can see before you all the time the goal to which he is flapping on his slow and heavy way, and you can see how easily, by some pregnant phrase or apt similitude, he might express it all in a moment with perfect fulness!

I ask you if it is not ultimately a more important matter for a commonwealth that all its citizens should have the power of thinking straight and thinking readily than that they should know how to manufacture a superior quality of sheepwash or a new sort of dye? I was once being driven over a bridge in a neighbouring colony, and, as the driver slowed his team, I asked him if the bridge was unsafe. He said he didn't know that it was, but there was a by-law against driving over it faster than a walk. And when I ventured to hint that such regulations mostly had a reason, he declined to discuss the question, and answered finally, that "it was only just a by-law." And I thought what a grand community a state would be where men never even tried to have a clear mind as to the how and why of things; and it appeared to me that great and complex questions of society and politics, voted upon by such men, would run a risk of meeting a strange fate indeed.

Education, then, is transcendently important. It is also a lifelong process. There is no error which I would combat more vigorously than the notion that education ends when a man is grown up. In truth

man is mentally never grown up; education has no finality. There is not a man here who reads and thinks, that does not feel as if he were painfully climbing an elevation to whose summit he can never reach; that when he was below in the valley he thought he saw all there was to see; and that, as he mounts higher and higher, more and more regions of inquiry open out before him, while still beyond his ken stretch other kingdoms of knowledge and the glory of them.

And if education is this, if the objects of education are these, which among its instruments are the best? Suppose with Bacon that "some men have entered into a desire of learning upon a natural curiosity, sometimes for variety and delight, sometimes for ornament and reputation, sometimes for victory of wit, and most times for lucre and profession; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason to the benefit and use of men," and suppose that, while we allow with all reasonableness that variety and delight and ornament and wit and lucre are desirable things enough, we nevertheless claim that the prime object of studies is to "give a true account of our gift of reason to the benefit and use of men," what shall we study?

This will depend on what a given study does for us in four respects—how far it teaches us to do, to know, to think, and to feel. These four things, it has been said, though I forget where, make up life—doing, knowing, thinking, feeling. Let us compare the effects of scientific and literary study on each of these elements of existence. I hope to be able to show

that, setting aside the matter of efficacy as a bread-winning study merely, literature will shun no comparison with science in its powers to make men do, know, think, and feel high and noble things, and things vitally important for the social problems with which every civilized man is confronted.

It is a common mistake to imagine that the study of literature is a light and barren matter, a kind of elegant æsthetic trifling, while science is severe, useful, and productive. It seems to be thought that science is concerned with things and literature with words, and that the literary student "sleeps and dreams that life is beauty," while the scientist "wakes and finds that life is duty." I want to remove that mistake. I want to show that the study of literature is a rigid and exacting discipline, that it is really concerned with thoughts involved in words, and that its effect is both to emphasize duty in life and also to equip man for its fulfilment.

In the first of these regions, in the sphere of doing, the advantage seems to be wholly on the side of science. We are always hearing, with more or less wonder and satisfaction, of the new things and the great things that science is doing, the novel operations it is inventing, the discoveries which it is turning to the use of manufacture, locomotion, and all the other resources and conveniences of life. The student of letters has nothing of a commensurable sort to offer. He acknowledges gratefully his obligations to science, and he does not pretend to pay science back in its own or any parallel kind. And in this fact

lies a danger of hasty conclusion. One might, in his haste, point to a boy who is learning chemistry, and tell us how that boy will at some time be able to do something with his knowledge. He will become an analyst, perhaps an inventor—at least, an applier of useful chemical processes. And if the question is asked, What is the boy who is studying literature going to do, what is he going to make or invent or apply in a material, tangible way? and if the answer thereto is to decide the whole question of education, then the students of literature have indeed a poor case to rely upon. The fruits of scientific instruction are so speedy and so tangible, and the fruits of literary education are so slow and so abstract in their nature, that I never wonder at the ignorant or the narrow-minded coming to what is called the Philistine conclusion on the question. But I do wonder at persons who call themselves statesmen doing the same.

And though this fact of "quick returns" is a truth which no sane being would deny, we may make a very serious qualification. It is true of the applied sciences, such as chemistry, physics, medicine. Yet there are a number of sciences of which it does not hold good, the study of which has no appreciable relation whatever to action, does not result in the tangible doing of anything. A great deal of geological and biological inquiry, for instance, is concerned as entirely with the satisfying of curiosity as ever literature can be. Go into a museum full of stuffed birds and beasts, labelled with hard names, setting forth their classifications and peculiarities. What

does the study of these do, in what is called a practical way, for you and for me, any more than the knowledge of a dead language or the classification of books? It is all useful for knowing and for thinking, but in no perceptible degree has it any relation to acting or producing. I want to bring this home to you, because men are accustomed to speak loosely and sweepingly, without distinction of terms. They tell us that science is utilitarian, and literature is not; and I want you to ask them *which* sciences are utilitarian, and how far sciences are as purely ornamental as they declare literature itself to be.

Pray understand me. I do not call it a demerit of certain sciences that they are non-utilitarian. With Huxley, I do not look upon science as merely a "comfort-grinding machine." But when its educational claims are based upon the grounds of its practical utility, I do say, first of all, as I understand education, practical utility is not to be rated supreme; and, secondly, that even science itself is frequently far from having any practical utility whatsoever.

But if literature cannot compare with the study of electricity or of chemistry in dazzling fruits, is it therefore incapable of "doing" in some sane sense of that word? Far from it. If properly pursued, as it unfortunately too seldom is, it imparts the power—no inconsiderable power—of expression. "Nothing," says Emerson, "seems so easy as to speak and to be understood." And yet to know how to speak and to write with such clearness as to preclude all mistake, with such attractiveness as to secure and sustain

attention, and with such vigour as to leave an abiding effect—all this is one of the hardest things to learn, and one which, except in cases of exceptional genius, only the study of literature can bestow. And thus the student of letters gains a practical power of his own, and can find scope for doing, in bringing forcibly and attractively before a wide circle thoughts which it is for the good of the world to spread :—

" For words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think."

His doing lies in the diffusion of pleasure and teaching by what he writes, just as the other's doing lies in the diffusion of comfort and profit by what he invents or applies.

And outside all this, there is, as I have said, the citizen life, the human life. And there is much to be done among men and for men in legislation, in organization, and in personal influence, where neither science as such nor literature as such is involved; but where the man must act for good or evil, not according to any special knowledge, but according to that amount of penetration, reflection, judgment, and justice which his methods and subjects of thought have built up in him. This is higher action than the other, and I think you may be brought to agree with me that, in this higher and more important action, the literary man should be at least not inferior to the man of science.

And in respect of knowing, of replenishing the mind with facts, of gaining the satisfaction that

arises from the gratification of that higher curiosity which is called a thirst for knowledge, and of applying data for thinking and acting upon, I seem to find that literature is at no disadvantage. I recognize that astronomy induces grand conceptions of the universe; that there is much to know from it of motions and sizes and distances of the heavenly bodies, and of this world of ours. I recognize that botany imparts most curious and fascinating information as to the unfolding, the habits, and the relationships of plants. The knowledge of the chemist that this and that element combined will produce water or lime, or a poison, or an explosion, is all most entertaining as well as most useful. No mistake could be greater than to suppose that the man of letters thinks such knowledge dry and vulgar. On the contrary, he exclaims with the Roman poet, *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*—"Happy he who first found power to learn the reasons of things." Though the same man of letters is fain to ask sometimes, amid the boastings of scientists, whether the man of science does, after all, know the reasons of things; whether he does know more than the operations of things and the effects of things. The chemist knows that, as a fact, certain elements combined do produce certain results; but does he know what, after all, one most desires to know, the reason why they so act and so produce? The electrician knows what his instruments will do, but he does not know why they do it; he does not know what electricity is. Let us be quite clear as to this. What does the scientist know?

He knows certain facts, valuable and immensely interesting facts; he knows certain laws of nature, and, in the applied sciences, he knows how to turn those laws to some great or small use. And all this is excellent knowledge, but it is not the only excellent knowledge. There are many other facts besides material facts; there are facts of human history and human thought and feelings; there are spiritual laws as well as laws of nature; there is a method of applying those laws every day of our lives; our whole life is an applied science. And it is these last facts and laws and applications that the literary student learns. If the objects from which he learns his lessons are not chemicals and plants and minerals, they are something equally great; they are "the seasoned life of man preserved and stored up in bookes." He knows of the past thoughts and deeds of men, the past events and changes of nations; his store of ideas and facts gives him the benefit of long and wide experience "without either wrinkles or grey hair," as old Fuller has it.

Let us look at some of the minuter knowledge of the students of literature and science respectively. A comparison must depend for its effect on the relative worth of the facts which each student knows. It is interesting to know that "the spark from a Leyden jar lasts only the 24,000th part of a second," or that "potassium melts at 58 deg.," or that "the brain consists of globules of 1-4,000th of an inch in diameter, united by a transparent viscid and coagulable gelatinous fluid;" but it is in no degree more

interesting or tangibly useful to know these facts than to know that "by-and-by" once meant "this very moment," or that in Chaucer's time "creature" was pronounced "cre-a-ture" and "night" as "neecht,' or that Sterne plagiarized largely from Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy." The biologist knows the arguments on which the theory of evolution is based, though he does not know that the theory is indubitable, nor can he turn it to much use if it is. The student of literature knows the far more certain data for supposing an evolution of human thought, and he can trace in a large measure the evolution of human expression. If a chemist tells me that ammonia consists of one part of nitrogen to three parts of hydrogen, I am prepared to tell him that Dante's "Divina Commedia" consists of three parts, the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*. If the electrician tells me that bodies charged with the same kind of electricity repel one another, I am prepared to tell him that the original meaning of "scandal" was "stumbling-block," and the original meaning of "tribulation" was "being passed under a harrow." And, as items of satisfying information, without reference to practical application, and merely as items of knowledge, I contend that the literary facts are as interesting as the others.

This is, perhaps, low ground; but I am ready to come to any ground one may reasonably choose. You may say, "These are matters of insignificant detail, but the comprehensive knowledge of nature and its workings is, as knowledge, of undeniable grandeur."

True, and no less so is the comprehensive knowledge of the workings of the human spirit, which literature, "the thought of thinking souls," imparts; no less exalting is it to know "the best that has been said and thought in the world." To know the mental past, the mental present, and to help to determine the mental future, seems to me—such is my taste—as satisfying as to know the physical past and present, and to guess the physical future.

And there is one great advantage wholly on the side of literature too manifest to be gainsaid. Those parts of scientific knowledge which induce the most sublime conceptions—those portions which, apart from details, determine man's view of the insignificance of his own planet and himself—those great speculations which mean so much to his way of looking at the universe—these all speedily find their way into literature. Is it evolution? The student of letters, though he cannot indeed judge of the convincingness of the data, cannot but learn what the theory is and what it means. Is it the nebular theory? He learns of that too. As Huxley admits, "the whole of modern thought is steeped in science; it has made its way into the works of our best poets, and even the mere man of letters is unconsciously impregnated with it." On the other hand, the scientist does not find literary facts and literary knowledge forced upon him in this way. In so far as he is a scientist and nothing else, all this region is to him an unknown land. Any man of letters knows that the sun is about 92,000,000 miles off, but not

every scientist knows who wrote "Don Quixote," and why he wrote it.

I have dealt with doing and knowing. I have said that scientific study can manifestly produce much and literature little or nothing in material operations, though there does arise from literature a real and valuable power of spreading thoughts, and a power of acting wisely in society. For knowledge I maintain that the facts of the one study are as worthy as the facts of the other, whether in the whole or in the parts; though, at the same time, I hold that while literature necessarily secures to itself much of the knowledge of science, science does not necessarily secure to itself anything of the knowledge of literature.

Yet, as I have urged, education in the best sense is less concerned about these—about doing and knowing—than about thinking and feeling. The question to be asked about one who claims to be educated is not so much what can he do or what does he know, as how does he think and what can he feel. It has been well said that the difference between a wise man and one who is not wise consists less in the things he knows than the way in which he knows them. Has a man logical and liberal thought and humanity of sentiment? Is he anxious to see luminously the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Does he habitually adopt the proper method of arriving at that clear vision? If so, his education has been a true education, no matter what subject it has been mainly concerned

with. But does he not do these things habitually? Then, though he have all the knowledge of a Leibnitz or a Whewell, his education has been false.

One cannot, indeed, think very soundly on any subject without some knowledge, but he may know many facts about that subject without much thinking. Let this be borne in mind, and let the chief question we ask about the educational utility of any study be, "How does it exercise the faculties that reason, as opposed to the faculties that merely receive?"

There are right and wrong ways of teaching and learning both science and literature. There is a logical way and an illogical way. The Royal Commission of 1861 reported that "science quickens and cultivates directly the faculty of observation, which in very many persons lies dormant through life, the power of accurate and rapid generalization, and the mental habit of method and arrangement. It accustoms young persons to trace the sequence of cause and effect, it familiarizes them with a kind of reasoning which interests them and which they can promptly understand."

Now, this statement seems a very reasonable one, and, in view of it, we picture our child at school "tracing the sequence of cause and effect" while he learns elementary science. Yet a teacher of science, giving instances of the sort of answer he occasionally received from these reasoning pupils, mentions one to this effect:—"Mummulitic limestone is made by little fishes, who live in the limestone and carry limestone to the mountains from the sea." And in that

most entertaining collection, "English as She is Taught," we find the pupil, who has found in science "a kind of reasoning which he can promptly understand," telling us that "drops of water are generally spherical for various reasons known only to the gracious Providence which has formed them." Believe me, I mention instances like these not in a flippant spirit nor out of any disrespect to the learning of science, but in order to show that we must qualify that sentence which I quoted from the Royal Commission's report by the proviso that the method of teaching be sound, and that the scholar be by no means a natural dunce. And so, when someone from the scientific camp shall discuss literary instruction, and shall ask us what good comes of pupils stuffing themselves with secondhand and muddled criticism of authors whom they have never read, we may reply that we, too, only assert the study to be a logical training when the method is sound, and when the scholar is not a natural dunce.

What is a proper mental training? It is a training which develops accuracy and attention; disciplines the recipient to a search for the how and why of things; distinguishes between facts that are normal and facts that are abnormal; and leads straight to consequences—a training which, according to Bacon, "taketh away all temerity and insolency of judgment by copious suggestion of all doubts and difficulties, and acquainting the mind to balance reasons on both sides, and to turn back the first offers and conceits of the mind, and to accept of

nothing but examined and tried;" or, as he puts it elsewhere, "teacheth a man what things are in their nature demonstrative and which are conjectural, and the use of distinctions and exceptions."

Accuracy and attention are the earliest things to inculcate in a child; logical deduction will follow as his mind matures. I shall be quite within the truth if I say, with the support of my professional experience, that all depends on the method of study. Unless the teaching be enlightened, it is not a habit of accuracy or attention, still less is it a logical habit, which will result. It will be only an exertion of memory, a submission of judgment to dictation, a growing impatience of seeing things as they are or forejudging their consequences. But we will assume that the teaching is enlightened, and we will begin with science. Now, the first thing that occurs to me is that elementary scientific facts and experiments have a great advantage over all other objects of study in attracting the attention of the very young. An interest in letters is difficult to arouse; it requires some maturity. To see how two invisible gases become visible water; to see how iron will fly to a magnet while brass will not; to see the gold leaves opening and shutting in an electroscope—all this is as diverting as play, and as easy to remember. But it is not a particularly attractive fact, nor is it so easy to remember, for instance, that "kine" is a doubled plural, the true plural being the Scotch "ki," and the rest of the word being formed on the analogy of "oxen," and so forth. There is an undeniable

advantage here for science in the way of attractiveness, but it is not true that there is any strictly intellectual advantage.

The principal thing is to get a child to ask why; and if the child asks why iron flies to a magnet and brass does not, I am sure he will not get so satisfactory an answer as if he asks why "kine" comes to be a plural of "cow." But then, says Professor Huxley, "the mind of the scholar should be brought into direct relation with fact; he should not only be told a thing, but made to see, by the use of his own intellect and ability, that the thing is so, and not otherwise;" and he continues, "Don't be satisfied with telling him that a magnet attracts iron. Let him see that it does; let him feel the pull of the one upon the other for himself." Yet I venture to think it is not intellect or ability which is engaged at all in such a case. The child sees and feels that the fact is so, and not otherwise, yet after all it is but ocular vision and physical feeling, and one may fail to see where the exertion of intellect comes in.

No! intellect and ability come in at the point where the student begins to say, if A is B, and B is C, A must be C; if such and such a law of nature exists, such and such consequences will flow from it. "Science," we are told, "is but organized common sense." We say, "Common sense tells me this or that." The science-student, who is informed of the properties of things, begins to use his intellect and ability only when his "organized common sense" begins working to some deduction from that informa-

tion. Let us then be quite clear that by scientific information is meant one thing, and by scientific training another thing, and that it is only a minority of those who learn what is called science who develop in any fulness the scientific habit. And, on the other hand, let us claim about the same proportion between those who acquire only literary information and those who acquire a logical literary training. Then, taking two persons really educated in each kind, let us see what sort of a mental habit they have each developed.

The scientist, whatever his science may be, if he is an original inquirer, first observes facts by noting and experimenting; then he compares these facts and classifies them; next he deduces conclusions from them; and, finally, he verifies them, to see that there is no mistake. Here there is plainly a full and clear logical method, which will be habitual whenever that man deals with material phenomena. This corresponds entirely to Bacon's requirement that we should "turn back the first offers and conceits of the mind, and accept of nothing but examined and tried." Here, you would suppose, is the clear thinker, most wise worker amid the operations of human society. But let us be cautious. The phenomena of life, the problems of humanity, are far more complex than any phenomena of nature or problems of physical science. They are in a different sphere, concerned with a different material. The scientific philosopher, when he has a mind to exercise his habitual method on facts of society, is doing a right and laudable

thing; but he cannot experiment in the same way upon his facts in the quiet of the laboratory; he cannot make sure of isolating those facts; things and motives are apt to be compound which he thinks are single; he cannot adopt his usual manner of verification. This seems to be the weakness of that study which, while it boasts of being so scientific in method, fails so signally in practice—I mean political economy—which, in dealing with some of the most intricate questions of human intercourse, fails, and cannot but fail, because it cannot calculate the amount of the factor of human motives.

I do, I repeat, appreciate the truth that a scientist's training is in its own domain most logical and thorough, but in the domain of society I cannot feel that the observations, or the experiments, or the deductions can be made truly by the *lumen siccum* of "science" alone.

Next, let us look at literature. Has this study, among original thinkers, its training in observation, in classifying, in deducing conclusions, in verification? Assuredly it has. In the study of a language, for instance, one observes a certain grammatical usage or a certain phenomenon of expression. One asks the reason of it, reduces its appearances under a rule which is only hypothetical for the time being, and about which one suspends his judgment until the rule is verified by the test of all existing instances. The student of grammar and expression works on the exact lines of the natural history sciences. All training is scientific which habituates the student to

comparing, seeking analogies, distinguishing between the exception and the rule, the accidental and the essential. And I venture to believe that the true student of language does all this in an eminent degree. He is not merely cultivating memory and taste—though these are great things—but he is cultivating reason, swiftness of apprehension, and yet caution and justness of mind.

How is literature a study? It is not the light amusement it is often supposed to be. It begins with a study of grammar, and it ends with a study of the conditions and progress of all human expression and human thought. Grammatical analysis plainly calls for exercise of intellect and ability. This is succeeded by paraphrase and translation of literary passages, in which the student must keep examining himself—"Do I understand this?" "Am I bringing out the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of this original?' Next, perhaps, comes composition, which teaches, or should teach, accuracy, clearness, and truthfulness. In writing a piece of English, a literary exercise of the same language which we speak so inadequately and laxly all our days, the student is perpetually on his guard. "Does this word cover exactly the sense I mean, no more and no less? How am I to qualify it or amend it? Is this or that epithet quite a meaning and an honest one? Is it sufficiently implied in what I have written? Can I not express this thought in a more clear or forcible or brief way?" Depend

upon it, clear and accurate expression demands clear and accurate thinking.

A main difference between the student of letters and the dabbler in literature is that the one has laid hold on some criteria of absolute beauty and strength and excellence in writing, while the other has not. You may think this is pure æstheticism. I say it is a logical exercise. From the very first moment that a young student is brought face to face with the correction of faulty sentences, his intellect is being robustly exercised. He is asked to criticise the lines—

> "The noise returning with returning light
> Dispersed the silence and dispelled the night"—

and he discovers with a little thinking that they are bathos, that the second line adds nothing whatever to the first, and that it is absurd in itself; he will tell you that of course noise must disperse silence, and light must disperse night, and that to cap the absurdity it is grammatically the noise itself which is made to dispel the night. This, of course, is a flagrant instance. I have chosen it as an exercise for the young scholar. But what we have in such an obvious form here occurs in more subtle forms, and occasionally in dangerous forms, in writings of vital import. And I claim that a habit of distinguishing these faults and these untruths is a most valuable habit to acquire.

And as to the study of mere words. Is it not ultimately of immense importance that men should

use their words with absolute precision? Half the mistakes of our proverbial philosophy, half the perniciousness of our common cant, is due to the slovenliness with which men use, and the various senses in which they accept, one and the same term. The ordinary peasant, says Max Müller, has a vocabulary of 300 words, the well-informed ordinary reader possesses some 3,000, the careful writer and thinker some 6,000, while a Shakspere mounts to 15,000. Why this gradation? Simply because clear and wide thought demands more and more distinct terms, cannot do without them, and therefore the wide and clear thinker must furnish himself with them. He must to that extent be a literary student.

And when the mind is matured and habituated to true methods, there comes the study of the writings of men arranged in order of time and place, the study of the manner in which thought is developed and propagated under the various limitations of knowledge and of social and religious views in various ages and various countries. The student of literature is not contented with knowing what and how Virgil, Dante, Chaucer, and Milton wrote, but he must know why each came to write as he did and not otherwise. Not only is the language of Tennyson different from the language of Spenser, but their tone and scope of thought is different. That much any amateur sees and feels; but the student of letters has to see and know with some exactness not only in what respects the language is different, but in what respects and through what causes there is

such difference in the mode and scope of thought. And to do this requires a training. As Mr. John Morley truly says, "The habit and power of reading with reflection, comprehension, and memory all alert and awake, does not come at once to the natural man." Still less does a habit and power of comparing the whole mental and moral tone of one book with the whole mental and moral tone of another book come at once to the natural man.

I trust you will admit that literature has its strictly logical training in a manner closely corresponding to that of science. And when the logical method so acquired is brought to bear on the problems of life, which are neither literature nor applied science, but human facts and social forces, I have already given some reasons for thinking that the scientist will scarcely find his preparation better than that of the man of letters. It is at least evident that men of literature come more to the front in governments and authority than men of science, and this, I believe, because of their wider views, more accurate views, and more sympathetic views of man as a social being. Whether you believe in a Gladstone or a Disraeli, the result is the same. You have to deal with the man of letters in both cases. Granting that both literary and scientific education produce a habit of endeavouring to see a question on as many sides as possible, to get at as many facets of a truth as possible, to which of the two will the more sides and facets be likely to appear? I think to the student of letters; because

he knows more of society in the past, he knows more of the workings of men's minds, he has been accustomed to contemplate the complexities of human motives as revealed in sober history, impassioned poetry, imaginative fiction; he has learned to know the manner in which the same fact has been looked at by men of the most widely different views at the most widely different epochs. "Consider," says Emerson, "what you have in the smallest chosen library—a company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries have set in their best order the results of their wisdom and learning." The literary student is led by pagan philosophers, Plato and Aristotle; by the Indian Buddha and the Arabian Mahomet, by the Christian fathers, by the Catholic teachers and the Protestant reformers, by utilitarian writers and transcendental writers, by writers of fact and writers of fiction, by conservatives and radicals, and by men of all other sorts of views—he is led by these to all possible quarters of a fact; and, best of all, so long as he is a student of literature only, he assimilates these various views incidentally—they are not set before him or read by him in a controversial spirit. He reads "not to contradict or refute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor for good talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider." And so the thoughts of a world become his thoughts.

If literature is "the thought of thinking souls," it seems to me that the social equipment of the literary student finds nothing comparable to itself in the

social equipment of the scientist. The scientist will, I believe, miss many of the side-lines of truth, and will often imagine his facts to be whole and independent while they are really only relative and partial.

Finally, in the matter of feeling, in regard to sentiment and morality, what are we to say? I cannot understand, though I have conscientiously striven to understand, the statement of the eloquent scientist whom I have had occasion to mention more than once, Professor Huxley, when he says in his "Lay Sermons" that science "has profoundly altered men's views of right and wrong," and that "in desiring to ascertain the laws of comfort, it has been driven to discover those of conduct, and to lay the foundation of a new morality." Where is this new morality? Is the morality of the Sermon on the Mount an obsolete morality? Is the morality of Socrates and Gautama in any essential matter different from the ideal of morality to-day? Let the astronomer "teach the infinite magnitude of the universe" and the chemist "demonstrate the infinitesimal minuteness of its constituent parts." Does this really affect your view or my view of the rightness or wrongness of any action? I had hoped to find as I read on that Huxley would have shown us the operation of this scientifically directed conscience; but he does not, and I fear he could not. No! Science seems to have nothing to do with our sense of conduct. How keenly does Mathew Arnold put it when he says that "in the generality of men there arises the desire to relate pieces of

scientific knowledge to our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty, and there is weariness and dissatisfaction if the desire is baulked;" and then, when the biologist tells us that an early ancestor of ours was an animal "with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits," we endeavour to "relate this piece of information to our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty." Does this help to direct our conduct or ennoble our lives? It is hard to see that it does.

But let the student of literature read Dante and Shakspere and Goethe, read history, read the lives of noble men and the creations of noble fancies, read of glorious deeds with rapture and infamous deeds with disgust and horror; then, indeed, do these things react upon his conduct. "Poesy," says Bacon, "serveth and conferreth to magnanimity, morality, and delectation," and not only poesy, but all writing of the higher kind. If evil communications corrupt good manners, it is fair to suppose the converse. Good communications amend evil manners, and such communications are most to be found in contact with noble minds, uttering their wisest and in their wisest way. It is not for nothing that these literary studies have been called the humanities.

If I were asked, therefore, which form of education I should think wisest—not in view of bread-winning, nor yet for special aptitudes, but in view of the social and moral duties of the ordinary human being—I should say that the best of all would be one in which there was a liberal acquaintance with the main facts

and processes of physical science, but chiefly a thorough study of literature; and that the second best would be one in which there was a thorough study of some science, but largely supplemented and corrected by a liberal acquaintance with literature. This is not hostility to science; it is only a relegation of it to its proper place, which is apt to be unduly exalted by the clamour of wondering ignorance. With Mr. Frederic Harrison, I do not think that any education can be sound which "leaves any great type of thought, any dominant phase of human nature, wholly a blank." And I think it must be apparent that science, confined to itself, does leave a most important province a blank.

In a democratic country I fear that excessive scientific education might lead to too great a faith in machinery, to doctrinaire methods, insufficiently considering the constituent parts of the nature of man. And therefore, seeing this danger, I feel constrained now and again, at opportunities like these, to raise a protest against those who, when we ask for educational bread for our rising generation, will insist upon giving it something which comes sadly near to being an educational stone.

CULTURE AND CANT.

When I was asked to address this assembly to-night, I was allowed entire liberty as to the choice of a subject. In the exercise of that liberty I have not been unmindful of the nature and aims of the body whose opening meeting this is. As I understand it, this society is one of those literary and dialectic associations which are coming to be recognized as very important agents in the strictly intellectual operations of the modern church. "Every form of association," says Aristotle, "aims at some good thing," and, I take it, the good thing aimed at by such associations as yours is the improvement of your knowledge and faculties, the possession of clearer and surer criteria for the ascertaining of truth—truth in literature, truth in art, truth in social relations, truth in politics. In other words, you seek enlargement of your culture; for culture, as I shall strive to explain, is nothing else but this. I have, therefore, chosen to speak to you upon the subject of culture; and since cant—that is to say, literary, artistic, social, and political cant—is the negation of culture, I must speak upon cant also.

I am aware that Matthew Arnold has written much, vigorously and luminously, upon culture; that Emerson has expressed, or rather, after his peculiar manner, adumbrated certain thoughts upon this subject as upon most others of spiritual interest; and that the matter which might be collected upon it from other thinkers would fill many a volume. But have no misgivings. You shall not be treated here to a distillation of Matthew Arnold, nor to a *rifacimento* of Emerson. Something I must, of course, owe to them and others—more perhaps than I am aware of, for no man knows where or when all the seeds of particular thoughts were implanted in him. At this day a person of a fair range of reading cannot say exactly what intellectual debt he owes to Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, Shakspere, Pascal, Goethe, or Carlyle. If we could trace back every thought to its source, we should perhaps be astounded to find how little is our own—how endless is the catalogue of those who have supplied their larger or smaller contributions to our sum of knowledge and understanding. All that can be called our own is the shape of the conglomerate, the form and consistency which the correlated whole has taken upon itself in the receptacle of our mind. One who gathers large stores of money cannot tell from whom he received each coin, or through how many hands that coin had passed before; none the less the sum is his, and the use to which he can put it is his. All that can be claimed is that one shall have fairly earned each thought from its original, that he shall have made it

his own and not have borrowed it for an occasion. Think of this; think how little our own few ideas are worth; and when we come to consider the necessity and the practical bearing of culture, the thought will have its weight.

I promise you, then, no thoughts which you cannot find scattered somewhere in literature between Moses and Ruskin; but I do promise you that you shall hear nothing about "the remnant," or "the Philistines," or about "sweetness and light"—happy though those terms are, and heartily as I admire him who used them so much; you shall not hear of culture as "the harmonious expansion of all the powers;" nor shall you have, with Mr. Ruskin, any wailings of Ichabod, any diatribes against those modern monsters the railways, or against the soul-withering immorality of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. Rather I think, with Mr. Harrison, that there is somewhat too much aloofness, too little effort, too much negation, about the sweetness and light of the admired author of that phrase, and too much pessimism, too little consideration, about the writer of "Fors Clavigera."

It is a serious drawback to all right thinking and right understanding that words are used among us with so little care, so little agreement, as to their exact signification. The last time some of us met in this place we tried to get at a better comprehension of the term "poetry"—what it implied and what it did not imply; and if people generally were to agree upon some clear definition of that word, whether it

be the definition I then offered or whether it be some other, I venture to think the question which has been agitating some of us of late, as to whether Browning is a consummately admirable poet or not, might be speedily settled. In our sytems of education, above all things else which we might teach, we ought to demand—what we never do demand—absolute precision in the use of words. This is really of vastly more importance to a community than "technical education," "classical education," or any other education about which a fuss may be made. Words are the current coins of speech and thought. When one person mentions a shilling or a sixpence or a pound, he means precisely what another man means by a shilling or a sixpence or a pound. There is no illusion here, no possibility of a quarrel as to the results of addition, subtraction, and division; but when one person uses a word, particularly if it is an abstract word, we cannot be sure that it represents the same value to both speaker and hearer; and amid a multitude of such divergences—sometimes important, sometimes trifling—it is no wonder that the addition, subtraction, and division processes of thought result in serious discrepancies and quarrels.

"Culture" is one of such words. When it was newly coined it bore a clear stamp and inscription; but, with the wear and tear of time and careless handling the legend and impress have grown indistinct. To not a few "culture" is another name for æstheticism, a superfine taste in things of art and beauty; to others it conveys the notion of social

polish and social gifts, with accomplishments in the literary or artistic regions. Others treat it as an equivalent of "refinement." Matthew Arnold makes it mean sweetness and light. So it is, though in a less degree, with "cant." To a very large number of persons the use of the word outside the domain of religion is practically unknown; whereas rightly it should be, and is, used in connection with all thinkable and speakable subjects.

When usages differ thus, it is a sound principle to go and ask the mint to decide the value of the coin; in other words, to go back to its etymology. "Culture," *cultura*, is tillage or cultivation. Apply tillage to the mind, and what results? Not necessarily æstheticism, or what are generally known as accomplishments—not necessarily a fine voice, a fine air, or fine manners. These, if the soil is congenial—if their germs are innate—may indeed be made to grow and flourish; but tillage cannot make all soils produce all things. A man of very high culture may be mean in appearance, awkward in manner, endowed with scarcely a single external accomplishment. Happier is he if he possesses these adornments, these fringes to his culture; but the body of culture may subsist equally soundly without them. The rough, unsocial Carlyle, with his thick northern burr, is a type of essential culture unadorned. Goethe, a man whom Carlyle loved, added to his culture many an elegant bedizenment. Culture, we say, is tillage of the mind, the removal of the clogging weeds, the turning up of the soil, so that the light and warmth

of knowledge may penetrate it, the rains and dews of wise thoughts and ideas may sink into it, and the airs and winds of discourse and argument may play upon it and stimulate it. Its latent powers are made capable of their best productions.

Here we will leave the figure, for metaphors and analogies, if pursued beyond their vital point, are apt to become misty or misleading. In plain terms, when is a man cultured? Not when he is instructed or informed, not when his head is full of facts and figures, not even if he is a "walking encyclopædia" or a "book in breeches;" but when, over and above the requisite supply of knowledge, he is educated in the true sense—when his best intellectual and moral faculties have been brought out and exercised, and have learnt the true measure of their strength and the true method of using it. Sound and varied knowledge he must have, to serve as data for his reasoning. Ideas in ample range must be familiar to him. Yet these will not suffice; they must be associated with the philosophic spirit and the philosophic method. Do not be frightened by the word philosophy. *Philosophia* is "the love of wisdom." A philosopher is a lover of wisdom. His heart is set on finding out, wooing, and wedding truth. The philosophic spirit is the spirit which such a one will possess—a spirit which, in thought, in conversation, and in debate, cares nothing for vanity or ambition, does not wish to appear clever or "consistent," but seeks only to get at the truth. Such a spirit has Aristotle when he says, "Plato is

my friend, Socrates is my friend, but truth is still more my friend." This is the spirit in which the man of culture ponders and discusses, showing neither fear nor favour toward any opinion, whether another's or his own. Do not mistake me. I do not say that life should be full of criticism, without courtesy or without reverence. I do not believe the freedom of criticism should be "the desolate freedom of the wild ass." Criticism backed by knowledge and ideas can never be discourteous or irreverent.

And the method must accompany the spirit. An ideal judge, besides his knowledge of law and his unbiassed spirit, must have a clear method of summing up. The man of culture, besides his stores of ideas and his impartial spirit, must be possessed of clear methods of reasoning and conclusion. Knowledge, ideas, openness and evenness of mind, reasoning power—these make culture, and true culture must have them all. I do not call a narrow-minded man, however well informed, a man of culture. And that is why I oppose culture to cant.

If you accept this view, you will admit that culture is not the special property of any class or condition of society. The peer and the millionaire may have none of it—they often do have none of it; the artisan and the labourer may have much of it; the professional classes, as things at present go, perhaps have most of it. It is in the power of everyone, whatever his occupation, who can read, reflect, listen, and discuss, to become cultured; it is out of the power of anyone, however wealthy or

exalted, to become cultured unless he read, reflect, listen, and discuss.

"Cant," by derivation, means sing-song. Pass by an infant school and hear the children monotonously chanting their earliest lessons—their "a, b, ab," "b, a, ba," and their "two and three are five." Perhaps it is true that infants learn best or solely in that way; it is none the less true that this dreary sing-song is not an intellectual process. The infants remember what they chant by dint of repetition, just as a parrot learns; "and," in the words of Calverley, "as for the meaning, it's what you please." The Roman, from whom we have borrowed the word, called this modulated reiteration "singing," *cantare*. As the child grows, he learns longer lessons, passages from books, rules of grammar, and so forth. Too frequently the passages and the rules have not been explained to him. He has not exercised his understanding upon them. He is compelled to take them as he finds them, unquestioned and uncomprehended. Therefore, when he comes to repeat them he drops into a sing-song delivery. He feels, to use an Americanism, that he is "speaking a piece"—not his own piece, but somebody else's piece. And when the boy or girl grows into man or woman, when the lessons of school are over, and the lessons of social and public life begin in earnest, is the sing-song done with? Nothing of the kind. More than half of mankind, when they are expressing what they are pleased to call their views, are going through the old school process of repeating by rote. One can almost

fancy at times that he detects the old swing of the voice. The opinion they are uttering is not really theirs; it is borrowed; it is the *ipse dixit* of some favourite speaker, writer, or politician, duly repeated by the disciple. They have not heard or read the other views of other thinkers; they have not taken pains to compare and deliberately choose the best Lacking the fund of knowledge and ideas, lacking the philosophic spirit and the philosophic method—in short, lacking culture; feeling, moreover, their own weakness, and striving to conceal their own incapacity of judgment, they make themselves content to learn what the fashionable world says, or the fashionable critic says, so that, on occasion, they may be prepared to "speak their piece." Wherein is this one whit better than the parrot, who tells you "it's a fine day," or that he is "a pretty Polly," without in the least knowing what sort of an attribute prettiness is in a parrot or fineness in a day?

This parroting, this thoughtless repetition, is particularly common in literature and art. Persons who make a point of speaking the truth, who would be greatly shocked if they had the least suspicion that they were not speaking the truth, are led by a mixture of motives—a little vanity and ostentation, a little desire to be agreeable, a little too much submission of judgment—they are led by these, I say, to slip into an unconscious, but none the less demoralizing, form of falsehood in speaking of things literary and artistic. They read the latest magazine

criticism on a book or on a picture. They perhaps do not read the book itself or examine the picture itself. They learn their lesson from the magazine; they repeat it till they fancy it is their own conception; and they endeavour, sometimes quite in good faith, to pass it off as such.

We might be tempted to pass this frailty good-humouredly by, if it were not for one consideration. The persons who use this cant are the great majority. We do wrong if we conceal this fact from ourselves. A confession of incompetence is rare, and marks either stark contempt or unusual magnanimity; on the other hand, the real and competent culture is equally rare. Between these rarities lies the great body of dilettante readers and society conversationists, who, after all, form the staple of a generation. The average taste of a generation may thus be determined by cant—it frequently is so determined.

There would be little resultant harm in this if it were always the soundest judges who wrote the criticisms, and if it were always the best criticisms that passed into cant. But, unfortunately, that has seldom been the case. For how many years has shallow criticism, with all its myriad-voiced parrotings, decried a great writer—a Wordsworth! Now this paralysis of the critical powers of a generation is a serious thing for its authors and its painters, as well as for itself. It is all very well to cry, "Truth is great and it will prevail." It is all very well to tell us that Shakspere and Milton and Wordsworth have

their reward now, while Robert Montgomery and Tupper are relegated to the kitchen. It is very well to tell us that pictures about which we now dispute will find their level in due season. But when is the due season? Are we justified in shifting our critical responsibilities on to the shoulders of time and posterity? Is it fair to our intellects or morals? Is it fair to those writers and artists who work for our edification or delight? No. Every utterance of cant is demoralizing and debilitating; a constant substitution of cant for thought results in flaccidity and attenuation of all our intellectual muscles.

There is nothing so contrary to humanity as cant. An ape can imitate, and will imitate, any acts, wise or foolish. A man should imitate only such acts and repeat only such lessons as his cultured judgment commends to him as wise. Cant reminds one of those echoes which are heard in certain valleys and caves. Utter but a sound, no matter whether it have sense or no sense, and that sound will be passed on and on, sent forwards, sideways, backwards, faster and faster, in all sorts of tones—deep, shrill, masculine, feminine, earnest, mocking—till it ends in a babble and a clamour utterly unmeaning and not seldom exasperating. So does a criticism or a maxim pass in cant down the corridors of human society, and the voices that bandy it hither and thither have about as much claim to the thought as the rocks have to the original utterance.

Culture and cant are thus opposed to each other. They cannot co-exist, except in so far as culture is

imperfect. Culture imparts and enhances the power of criticism ; cant stunts and paralyses it. By cant, one enslaves his judgment ; through culture he becomes able to say, what it is the consummation of humanity to say, *Liberavi animam meam*, "I have emancipated my soul." Culture knows not only whether it likes a thing, but why it likes it. In literature it is not to be deceived by sonorous syllables or highly coloured language. It examines the thoughts beneath the sound, it seeks to discover whether the colour is only paint or whether it is the healthy glow due to the warm life-blood of the sense. If in things of intellect one will say, "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things," he must do so by culture. Cant will keep him for ever a child. We know that it is only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, from eloquence to bombast. How is the reading world to know when an author takes this step ? How is it to "free its soul" from the professional critics and criticasters ? By cultivation.

There are those who think they have done a good work when they have succeeded in creating a fashion, such as that of belauding Greek sculpture. Yet, when the praise is only learned by rote—not based on personal judgment—what is the result ? Why, Greek sculpture *laudatur et alget.* People will talk superficially about Pheidias and meanwhile deface their cities with such paltry and soulless figures as those in our public gardens, or the lions which lie

before our public buildings. It is of no earthly use for a man to learn his little lesson that the Laocoon is a superb group, if he cannot at the same time say with Lessing why it is superb. It is of no use for a man to repeat that Pheidian statuary is perfection, unless he has rationally assured himself that perfection lies in the expression of the abidingly and serenely beautiful, avoiding the specious semblance of mutable individual things, and, above all, of the ugly and the vile.

It will not be difficult to see that this question of culture is a most practical one. On the extent of our national culture depends our national taste in all forms of art, and, something weightier still, our national judgment in social and political matters. It is not upon the judgment and taste of some select few, but upon those of the great body of the people, that a nation's productions will depend. And taste and judgment themselves depend on culture. It is a common fallacy to suppose that the excellence of ancient art in Greece and of mediæval art in Italy was due to some wonderful, some unparalleled natural aptitude in the artists of those countries. It seems to be imagined that there was an inexplicable epidemic of plastic genius in Greece during a particular century, the century from Pheidias to Praxiteles, just as there was apparently an epidemic of literary genius in England in the Elizabethan era. If one means by this that there was a particular century in which Greek sculpture flourished more than at any other period, it is true; but if one means

that by some accident the very greatest geniuses were produced all about the same time, it is probably not true. The rude carvings at Selinus are proof that the Greeks had to learn their art. We need not deny the national aptitude, but we must not deny the national training, the national culture. There were geniuses before Pheidias, and there have been many after him; but the mass of the people among whom the first and the last lived have been without the true principles of taste. Being blind they followed blind leaders.

Wherever culture is most widely spread, there art flourishes in its best atmosphere; wherever culture becomes the special property of a few, and the great mass deal in cant and not in criticism, there art grows unworthy, tricky, fantastic, and poor. The man, the artist, must have his *milieu*. If the arts fail among us, we must blame ourselves and not the artificers. If we do not train our critical powers and supply ourselves with a basis to our judgments, we can never compel artists to overcome their idiosyncrasies, to amend their weaknesses, to reduce their extravagances—in fact, we leave them to do as they like, in the belief (which, so far as I can see, artists widely entertain) that their works will at least impose on somebody, and that the criticism which will be bestowed upon them is quite as likely to be wrong as right. I suspect that a Greek architect who set about an unsightly edifice, or a sculptor who produced an ungraceful statue, would have been shamed out of his errors or driven into obscurity by the derision,

not of a critic here or a critic there, but of the whole body of his enlightened nation. That is the way to get good art and good literature. That is why we tolerate so much art and so much literature that is bad. Cardinal Antonelli told Matthew Arnold that the common people of Italy, in passing their judgments "*è brutto*" "*è bello*" were generally very near the mark. It is easy, therefore, to understand that art must be good in Italy to gain success. And this popular Italian correctness of taste is not congenital so much as it is thought. It is rather due to constant association with the best style of work—that is to say, to a liberal measure of culture in that form. Plato puts the necessity of training in a simple manner. "We should be trained," he says, "from earliest childhood so as to feel pain and pleasure at those things at which we ought to feel pain and pleasure." This the Athenians were; this we are not. No; we are satisfied to divide ourselves into two canting sects. The one sect contents itself with that pernicious maxim, "*De gustibus non est disputandum*," a maxim which is, of course, final. It is in sooth a fine piece of cant, relieving one of all the burden of thinking and all the tiresomeness of training. It was no wise man who first used the phrase; or if he was so, he did not mean what we mean by it. Plato tells us the opposite; Aristotle tells us the opposite; modern thinkers tell us the opposite. We *must* dispute about tastes if we want to have any taste worth calling such. The other sect is one less candid. It is the sect of those who pretend to have a taste,

but who borrow that taste as they do the cut of their clothes, from the recognized setters of the contemporary fashion. They ask no questions. "A wise question," it has been said "is half-way towards knowledge." The student's question "*Why* is this to be commended or condemned?" "*Wherein* lies its excellence or defect?" is half-way towards emancipation from cant. But as a rule the great body of us do not ask it, or, if we do, we do not seriously wait for an answer.

This is the case with sculpture, painting, and architecture. We are no better when we come to literature. Our magazines are full of what Professor Freeman calls "more chatter about Shelley." There are articles on Wordsworth and articles on Browning, lucubrations on the egoism of Victor Hugo, and dissections of the genius of Emerson. Now these articles, when good of their kind, may be of great service to culture if properly used; they are ruinous to culture if abused, as they commonly are. If we have really read an author himself; if we have first studied him, and afterwards all the good that has been said about him; if, possessed of this groundwork, we have discussed him as I have no doubt this society does discuss great works of literature, then one of those magazine articles may serve to present us with new views, may strengthen us in some we have adopted, and make us less tenacious of others. But if we have not read the author himself, or have only dabbled in him; if we do not propose to study him, but only to amuse some idle moments with what

is said about him, we become not cultivated by such articles, but steeped in cant.

We have lately heard a good deal about Browning. I should not choose to give you my own opinion, unless I could at the same time give you my reasons for it, and do as much justice as I could to the opposite view, and that would take a lecture all to itself. But what I would point out is that it is not enough for us to say, "I like this and I don't like that." We must be prepared to show cause. To do this we must first have thought out the principles of the art in which our poet is held to be a master. What makes a poet? How far does a given writer satisfy the conditions at which we arrive? Are we ready to analyse the qualities of his verse and his thought, till we can lay our finger definitely on what we consider his points of strength and of weakness? Say we find genius and passion, do we find power of language and melody? If the last quality, and still more clearness, be conspicuously absent, what value are we to set upon the rest as elements of poetry? May a man not be a great thinker but an incomplete poet, as Emerson was? I do not wish to throw off any *obiter dictum* on these questions; but, in the name of all that is intelligent and straightforward, let us ask and answer some such inquiries before we add our echo either to the applause or the scoffs. Cardinal Newman, for instance, says, "I do not claim for a great author as such any great depth of thought or breadth of view; but I ascribe to him as his characteristic gift, in a large sense, the faculty of

expression." It is possible to combat this opinion, but it has at least the merit of containing a principle. It is his luminous statement and absolute justice of principles which make the critical greatness of Coleridge. His analysis of the qualities of poetry, and particularly of Wordsworth's poetry, in the "Biographia Literaria," is my constant admiration. So it is, though he is marked by less serenity and justice, with Carlyle. I know no exercise more valuable than a careful study of these analyses. Less thorough, less general, less impartial, but helpful reading all the same, are Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."

And now let us come to graver subjects of a more practical bearing. There is cant, dangerous cant, obstructive and destructive cant, working with far-reaching power in society and in politics. Many innocent diversions and charms of public and private life are denied us through cant, many enormities are sanctioned by it, many panics originate in it. I mean, you will remember, second-hand opinion, claptrap, senseless or misapplied formulæ, passed from tongue to tongue. Would you wish me to specify some of these phrases, these ancient saws and garbled proverbs, which the masses catch as they catch the measles, but which they do not get rid of quite so soon? Nothing would please me more, but this is scarcely the time for so doing, and by some rule of ineffable wisdom university professors in this country are, I believe, supposed to have no political views.

Still I am at liberty to explain my allusion. There is a terrible word to which Wendell Holmes draws attention, a word of awful sanctity among Hindus—the word *Om*. I don't know precisely what it means or whether it means anything very precise, but its effect on the nerves of a pious Hindu is said to be awful. We all remember the venerable lady who was affected to tears by "that blessed word Mesopotamia." We can afford to laugh at Om and Mesopotamia, but we have had and have among ourselves forms of words which act upon large numbers of people very much as Mesopotamia acted on that female mind. Churchmen are familiar with the contention concerning *homoousia* and *homoiousia*. I am far from taking it upon me to say that theologically the contention is not an important one, but what I do take it upon me to say is that those terms soon passed, among the majority of those who used them, into mere sounds, mere shibboleths, and that many of those who suffered by the struggle were, after all, "martyrs of a diphthong." We hear a proposal sometimes summarily disposed of as being "un-English." What a precious piece of cant is this same "un-English!" It deliberately closes the windows of our minds and puts up the shutters, so that no light from the wider world may intrude into our little house. No wonder Heine called the English language "the hiss of egoism." "Britannia rules the waves." So long as semi-inebriated gatherings roar this refrain, can we hope that the nation will sternly demand of the British Admiralty that vigi-

lance and progress which experts tell us are not now shown? "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," "The Divine Right of Kings," "The Liberty of the Subject." A long list could be made of such "winged words," which determine, or have determined, the feelings and the votes of great masses of people. There is much in the old saying, "Give me the making of a nation's songs, and I will give you the making of its laws." With such phrases our politicians go on weaving ropes of sand. There is no cohesion in these detached and often self-contradictory phrases.

And what does culture do in the matter? Culture does not dwell, as is often supposed, in a passionless *intermundium*. It does not lead only the life contemplative. It fits a man for social and political work, by training him to think straight. Though it recognizes with Epictetus that "every matter has two handles," it recognizes none the less that it is a duty to take hold of one of them. But while the uncultured man can only get hold of the right handle by accident, or by a guess of rare sagacity, the man of culture does so by a rational choice, and will be right ten times to the other man's once.

As I once said in an article upon "straight thinking," the cultured man is like the train which runs with certainty from start to destination, while the uncultured man is apt to be switched off on to another track by some cant phrase or other. He does not perceive his error, he appears to be running smoothly enough, but in the end will find himself

anywhere but at the point he meant to reach. Without going so far as to say with Socrates that all virtue is knowledge, we may assert that knowledge and straight thinking are essential to sound legislation. In view of this fact, I would refuse utterly to place in Parliament a man of one idea and a man of one book. Still worse is the man of no idea and of no book. "The senate is the soul of the people," said an ancient worthy. Let us have a cultured soul, if we can anywise obtain it. By large numbers of societies such as yours culture may be widely spread throughout the body politic, and a cultured body politic will make sure of the wisdom of its legislators. Then, when questions of federation or separation or any of those great matters arise, as arise they must, we may rest assured that reason will prevail—that men will speak genuine and significant thoughts instead of stringing together "the phrases they have got among them to express their no-meaning by."

There is only one other matter—but an important matter—on which we must touch. You will say, "We all want culture, but how are we to get it? What is the price to be paid for it?" I have already said that culture is not erudition. If it were, it would manifestly be an impossibility to many. Of means to obtaining it I should name reading, reflection, discussion, conversation, and travel. Reading first; reading, as Matthew Arnold puts it, the best that has been thought and said in the world. Good books and well digested are the grand nutriment of

thought. Ptolemy called the great library at Alexandria "the pharmacy of the soul." This is a true quality of the good books—to purge and invigorate the mind, to make it healthy. Vauvenargues has it—"Good books are the essence of the best minds, the abstract of their knowledge, and the fruit of their long vigils." He says, however, *good* books. There are, unfortunately, many bad books, useless books, and worse than useless books. The easy diffusion of literature, the abundance of printed matter in our time, is not wholly a thing to congratulate ourselves upon. This is a bookmaking age, and it is easy for one who has no guide or adviser to make a bad choice of matter, or to make an excessive choice. There is the literature false in sentiment and unsound in reasoning. Such bad literature is, according to George Eliot, "spiritual gin;" it reduces the faculties to a state of dissipation, and it were better to read nothing at all. I agree with Carlyle:—"We ought to cast aside altogether the idea people have that if they are reading any book, if an ignorant man is reading any book, he is doing rather better than nothing at all." There is also the bookmaking literature, pure and simple, not necessarily false, but worthless, inane, empty of ideas, information, or suggestion. I lately read a well-got-up book by Mr. Mahaffy on the art of conversation; and I could but regret the waste of time. Six or seven terse sentences of La Rochefoucauld on the subject, which could be read in less than as many minutes, contain more thought than all the scores of pages in that volume.

We cannot spare the time to read what is positively bad or what is negatively useless. We want to direct our reading so as to bring the largest number of ideas and views of things into correlation. What books do this for us? I am not going to give you another list of the hundred best books. We have had enough of that. But in general I would express the opinion that, after all, the works which will be found to do most for culture are those books to which the consensus of many years or many countries has given the places of honour—Plato, Aristotle, Dante, Shakspere, Bacon, Goethe, Carlyle, and many more—much more than enough to make a hundred volumes, though, perhaps, not more than enough to make a hundred authors. These, and not all sorts of galvanically resuscitated works of forgotten mediocrities, are the works to be read by seekers after culture who are not professed students of literature. Read Mr. Harrison's choice of books, and the remarks of his master, Comte; read what Emerson has to say on books. You will find that all your advisers recommend that reading should not be of one place, one time, or one subject; it should include all Bacon's three parts of learning, history, philosophy, and poetry—that is to say, the literature of record, the literature of reason, and the literature of ideas and imagination.

But the reading must be reflective and discriminating. In the Mishna there are four sorts of readers—sponges, hour-glasses, strainers, sieves. The sponges absorb everything alike; the hour-glasses take matter

in at one end and let it out at the other; the strainers let out all the good and retain only the dregs; the sieves let out the useless and retain only the good. We want, in this respect, to be sieves—to sift what we read.

I have mentioned discussion as a help to culture. I believe it to be such, so long as it is

> "Friendly free discussion, calling forth
> From the fair jewel truth its latent ray,"

so long as it really "ventilates" a subject—that is, lets the free air of ideas play upon and around it. But discussion may, on the contrary, become a great enemy to wisdom and method, if it degenerates into expression of crude opinions and adherence to them because they are once expressed, if it results in ambitious displays of paradox, if a disputant seeks conquest and not truth.

Conversation, too, is important. It shapes our thoughts if we have any; it gives us thoughts if we have none; it makes us know what we really do think, how far we think it, and with how much of ourselves we are dissatisfied. "Society," remarks Oliver Wendell Holmes, "is a strong solution of books." But he was speaking of American society, and particularly of Boston society. I am afraid our own society is but a very weak solution of books. I do not come here to say unpleasant things, nor, on the other hand, to hide my convictions. The English publishers tell me that the demand for good books in these colonies is strangely small. One must, for many reasons, believe them. Society among us is a

strong solution of money and sport—it is anything but a strong solution of books. Conversation of value is, therefore, rare. It lies with societies like yours to help to remedy this state of things.

Travel, also, is of great value. One of the great defects—the greatest defect—of our Australian Natives' Association—is that its members are the least travelled among us. They have, speaking generally, seen nothing of other countries, older countries, wiser countries, more learned countries, richer and more powerful countries. They have been fed and swollen on the rank wind of fulsome flattery by itinerant lecturers and patronizing foreigners. They get a conception of our country and ourselves quite out of proportion to our real bulk in the world. Travel is the best remedy for this; but travel is a thing everyone cannot get, and in its absence reading, reflection, and conversation among a society which is a strong solution of books are the best means of correcting the mental vision.

And now I have done. I have used the terms culture and philosophy frequently. I have been compelled to do so. I feel that to many ears philosophy has an uncongenial sound. I trust none of you will go away with that notion. Look up the word in your fullest dictionary, see what it means, and then agree with Milton—

> "How charming is divine philosophy—
> Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute,
> And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
> Where no crude surfeit reigns."

THE TEACHINGS OF HISTORY.

"AN ESSAY," says Ellesmere in "Friends in Council," "is not worth much in itself—is likely, indeed, to be rather a nuisance; but it gives good room for discussion." In what I have to say upon my somewhat rashly comprehensive subject this is my chief hope—to afford room for good discussion. The "teachings of history" are numberless; a lecture cannot pretend to gather them one by one into a complete body of doctrine. My intention to-night is humbler. It is merely to ask you to recognize that the study of history in the proper sense is no *dilettante* study, but a study of exceedingly practical bearings on citizenship, still more on statesmanship.

Apart from the fact that this is the centenary of the French Revolution, I have been led to this particular subject by two considerations. The one is that historical study is strangely neglected in our educational system, or else is reduced to so jejune a narration of facts as to be virtueless. Whether this neglect is due to that intellectual and moral cowardice which results from our sectarian differences, I do not know. I only know that we are bringing up our

citizens and statesmen in either contempt or fear of the lessons of history. My second reason was this: some time ago I was privileged to address an association of native-born Australians on the "Teachings of Travel," and I then urged that there were among our native-born young men tokens of a deep-seated misconception of that great world, in which we do not at present bulk very large. It appeared to me that the best corrective was travel. Now there is also in our midst an unreasonable conceit of this particular generation of the nineteenth century; there is an assumption that its political and social questions are something peculiarly distinctive of it, requiring a peculiarly constituted nineteenth century mind to deal with them. The consequence is that crowds of persons are found quite prepared to make and unmake laws, and to embroil international or economic relations, by the sole light of that uncertain luminary called common sense. Truly quoth Oxenstiern, "*Quantilla sapientia reyitur mundus!*"

The corrective for this self-sufficient empiricism is history. Give us, indeed, in our voters and lawmakers everything practical that we can get; but give us also, I beg, an intelligent apprehension of other places and other times, so that we may attain to what we now most lack—"wise suspense in forming opinions, wise reserve in expressing them, wise tardiness in trying to realize them." Our future is one of immense potentialities; it lies in our hands; we must not suffer it to be spoiled by the ignorant or the doctrinaire.

Perhaps I should first correct some popular errors touching what history means. What is history Clio, the historic muse, is traditionally represented roll in hand, with books outspread at her feet. Pictorially this is well; but history is not wholly gleaned from books. All records of the past are history. We want to know what a people was, as well as what it did. A people's history in this sense is gathered from its monuments and works of art, as well as from what is written by or of it. A building or a carving tells the mind and feeling of its creator. Take all forms of record, not only annals, chronicles, and codes, but all other memorials, excavated from Karnak or Troy, deciphered from obelisks, interpreted from the spirit of a Parthenon, a Roman aqueduct, or a Gothic aisle; take the poems in which men have expressed their ideals, the religions and philosophies they have believed; combine with these whatever else reveals the material, mental, social, and political condition of man in different places from age to age, and you have the material of history. Is this all useless? Is it to be so regarded by a generation which finds it so important to study evolution in biology and the successions of geological formations?

History as a mere narrative of past facts is, indeed, worth little. But as it approaches nearer to a biography of humanity, its interest and its value become immense. "History," said Voltaire in his haste, "is only the picture of crimes and follies." It is in a great measure such, if it means only the

doings of tyrants and kings, their battles and slaughters; though, even so, it would be worth our while to know about and to prevent a repetition of those same follies and crimes. But the remark is untrue of that history which regards all human work and progress. Crimes and follies there are in plenty in the picture; but there are in the picture also, for instance, the workings of nations up to freedom, the efforts by which they sought it and the counsels by which they established it; there are the steps, irregular enough sometimes, whereby in social organization, in mental culture, and in moral virtues, men have ascended and are ascending still. A complete historical picture cannot be made from chronicles alone. The mere facts of a long period of Assyrian empire are written on the tablets of the library of Ashurbanipal, but the civilization of the people is more definitely seen in the sculptures Layard exhumed and the canals we still can trace. Take the earliest period of Grecian society. From what manner of record do we know it? From the poetry of Homer. Yet Homer gives us nothing of what is generally known as "historic" matter. No; but he does something equally valuable—he portrays for us a certain condition of society, with a certain range of ideas in morals, law, and belief. Such a condition may not have been precisely one actually existent at the time he would have us believe, but that is of little moment. It is sufficient that it was a condition conceivable to Homer. Not even the greatest geniuses—Homers and Shaksperes—can wholly emancipate themselves

from the prevailing "Zeitgeist." Besides historic facts, we require to know how those facts appeared to the better, the average, and the worse minds of the time; for a people may be superior to its own deeds, and, like individuals, may "see and approve the better, but follow after the worse." Hence, to my thinking, a special value attaches to those writings which reveal events and ways of thought unconsciously. The truest insight into Roman culture under the earlier empire is perhaps to be obtained from Pliny's letters; the moral state of Italy and France in the earlier part of the sixteenth century receives peculiar light from the autobiography of Cellini; the life and thought of English society last century is intimately seen in the *Spectator* and Boswell's "Life of Johnson."

Modern historians more and more recognize the significance of these various materials. I may add a few words about the historic spirit. It has been a fault of many modern writers that they have sought to substantiate from history their own prepossessions. Instead of humbly asking Clio's guidance, they put her on the rack. However philosophically-minded the historian, he will with difficulty avoid having "some theory to maintain, some party to support, some hero to glorify." Macaulay cannot bring himself to represent impartially a Bacon or a Marlborough. He forgets that, as Montaigne puts it, "the action may be praiseworthy though the man is not." Mitford, in his now fortunately obsolete "History of Greece," finds all oligarchical proceedings faultless.

Grote, on the other hand, finds perversity in each, and seems to be holding a brief for the democratic cause. Gibbon's obtrusive scepticism unduly colours his "Decline and Fall." Hence, though with Gibbon it has not yet occurred, it is the fate of each historian to be superseded by some other. Observing this, one might, perhaps, suspect that history is after all a "vast Mississippi of falsehood," and that its lessons can never be secure; but, in truth, the supersession of history by history is a mark of advancing certainty in both the science and the art, betokening increased accuracy of fact, increased hold upon the true historic method and spirit.

The earliest history is but annals. Next comes the Herodotean stage, uncritical story, charming to read, a blending of "Dichtung" and "Wahrheit," confounding sober fact with the legends and myths of folk-lore. Then follows the stage of clear, impartial narrative—the Thucydidean mode—which would indeed be the perfection of historic writing if it were only applicable—as, unhappily, it is not—to other than contemporaneous events. In modern times these stages more or less repeat themselves. But there is a stage beyond. As in later Greek literature a philosopher like Plutarch sought to turn history to use in the moral instruction of mankind, so in our day the effort of the historical teacher is to go beyond events, to search for causes, and, if possible, devise such general laws as may guide or guard society. Facts in themselves are nothing. History, the Greek *ἱστορία*, is "inquiry," and beyond inquiry of the

truth of facts lies inquiry of the causes of facts and the bearing of facts.

A century and a half ago Voltaire and Bolingbroke protested that historical study should not be a matter of mere facts and sentences. But it takes long to kill old errors. No doubt our boys and girls still misspend their time in learning the precise month King Stephen died, the precise number of French slaughtered at Agincourt, the precise dying words of Cardinal Wolsey. Our elementary histories, and many that should know better, still divide their chapters by reigns and centuries, as if human progress turned over a new leaf with new years or new kings. Even Carlyle (with whom, indeed, history is narrative, an epic poem perhaps, like his "French Revolution") lumps together in undiscriminating contempt a whole century—the unfortunate eighteenth—as if time were arranged in separate heterogeneous blocks, or in streaks distinct as those of the conventional rainbow.

I would not underrate the mere pleasure of historical reading. Though "life is real, life is earnest," the earnestness is not so terribly morbid that all reading is to be serious study; and among mental diversions there are few greater than the perusal of books like Motley's "Dutch Republic" or Macaulay's "History" or Prescott's "Peru." The mere possession of knowledge has its satisfaction. There are, indeed, irredeemable Philistines who do not comprehend this pure desire of knowledge. They are as bewildered as the Arab Sheikh who said to Layard, "Why do

you spend so many purses on such things? You say that these stones teach you wisdom, but they do not help you to make better knives or chintzes, wherein the English chiefly show their wisdom." Yet most of us are not in this state. And even while reading for diversion only we feel that we are imbibing a certain amount of greater tolerance of other peoples and other creeds, of social wisdom, of encouragement to high purpose. "Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime."

But there are deeper lessons which do not yield themselves without deliberate search.

Human society is a thing of extreme complexity, of slow and spontaneous growth. Our forefathers have been and have done something in virtue of which we are what we are. The continuity of history has no absolute breaks; its study is the study of cause and effect. Now these are important facts. When the human body sickens, we do not permit the empiric to pour nostrums into us, much less to perform an amputation. We ask the trained physician to diagnose the ailment, and to prescribe remedies according to his science. And yet, on the contrary, when the social frame is out of sorts, are we to accept the specifics of advertising quackery? Are we to forget that he who prescribes for society must understand society's anatomy and the laws of its growth?

The first lesson of history that should be learned is the facts of social development. Intelligent citizens are to be found who believe only in the

nineteenth century ; others pretend to believe only in the "good old times." The one notion leads to the most mischievous extreme of revolutionary Radicalism, the other to the most vexatious extreme of obstructive Conservatism. Analyse these notions, and it will be found that your revolutionary is a believer in the nineteenth century because, besides that it is the century which has had the merit of producing himself, he does not comprehend from history that all solid progress has been slow and tentative ; while your obstructive is such because he does not comprehend that history is a story of new devices meeting new conditions. Now, personally, I believe in the good young future, though not in all respects, nor perhaps as regards the immediate morrow. But what I urge is that we should be complacent about quite the right thing, and not about the wrong thing. For instance, we are—as we well may be—complacent about our mechanical and locomotive facilities ; but let us recognize that no absolutely new light has come upon human intellect or morals through railways, telegraphy, or the mitrailleuse.

One of the most prevalent opinions of to-day is that the world is inevitably tending to democracy as the recognized form of government for all civilized peoples. On what is this opinion based ? Theoretically, no doubt, on an intuition of human rights, but historically on nothing more than the events of one century over a very limited part of civilization. But the historian finds that in the earliest historic dawn

democracy, oligarchy, kingship, despotism, existed side by side as they do to-day. He finds that democracy has fallen to decay rather sooner than other polities. He finds the Jewish people, after long use of popular government, anointing for itself a king; he finds Rome, after centuries of republican institutions, subjecting itself all at once to the most despotic rule. What could seem more certain than that the French Revolution, inspired by its "Goddess of Reason," had made monarchy impossible? Yet, how soon a Buonaparte had "changed all that"! If we guess the future, we must not call it prophecy. The American republic is no convincing instance, as I may show.

That there is a gradual general progress of the human race is certain; that there is ultimate hope of human perfectibility has been held by many admirable minds, different as Diderot from Wordsworth. But this progress and this perfecting are to be counted by millennia rather than by generations; they do not proceed by leaps and bounds, much less by jumps. Nor are they regular all along the line. There have been abnormal seasons of retrogression here and there, as in Western Europe after the Roman power was broken. The great flood-tides of ideals and enthusiasms have their ebb. It is questionable whether the American of to-day is the equal of those who signed the Declaration of Independence or drew up the Constitution.

If this is so, if a tendency at a particular moment may not be a forward but a backward tendency,

surely it is well to avoid hasty assumptions about democratic or other advance.

This is not the place to discuss the development of institutions among civilized peoples. I might, from the lessons of comparative history, and comparative jurisprudence, which is part of history, describe the common manner in which all our societies have been evolved; how at first there was a patriarchal stage, when the individual had no separate rights, conscience, or responsibility; how patriarch of family developed into chief of tribe, and chief of tribe into patriarchal king of the common stock; how aristocratical government often, though not of necessity, arose where kings were weak or criminal; and how, here and there, democracy followed upon the selfishness and stubbornness of oligarchic rule. And, keeping along these lines, I might show how government "for and by the people" has regularly tended to pass into anarchy, into ochlocracy—government by the mob. Thanks to Sir Henry Maine, I might traverse the same ground again, and follow the history of the one most definite element of steady progress, showing how law has steadily crystallized itself; how the king's arbitrary "dooms" were replaced by that customary law of which privileged bodies were custodians, and this again by codes so fixed and recognized that every man could take his stand upon them for right and liberty. I might gather from all this that, so far has the "individual" been from "withering" as his world grew great, that

he has gained in rights and freedom of expansion as he has done in duties.

If you ask what pertinent effect this knowledge should have, I reply that it should give pause to revolutionary spirits; it should keep them from misleading themselves and the ignorant by shallow *à priori* notions of polity like those of Rousseau, which had such extraordinary influence on the Jacobins. Rousseau's "Social Contract" is based on a fallacy, the fallacy of a departed golden age of "the state of nature." Rousseau believed, not in progress, but decay. He cared nothing for history. He acknowledges as much when he says that his principles are not drawn "from authority, but spring from the nature of things and are based on reason." Well, Frankenstein's monster was "based on reason," and it was not a success. A society which has grown as the natural man grows is more to be relied on. One man's reason may be another man's folly. Similarly, had Plato known that all the tendency of civilization had been to give expansion to the individual, his ideal republic would not have been one which was based on the effacement of individuality.

A hundred years ago the air of France was full of schemes and formulas, containing much of truth, but so largely misconceiving the organization of society that their application was foredoomed to excess and disappointment. To-day we have our socialists, our communists, our cries that *la propriété c'est le vol.* I shall not pretend to argue the points of any of these

propaganda. That is not my function. Suffice it to point to one great lesson of history, the lesson of the growing independence of individual man, in his private rights, his private conscience, his power to act and work for himself, consistently with the maintenance of civil order. Human nature may be crushed now and again by a legislative Procrustes, but not for long, and not successfully. Puritan tyrannies, sumptuary laws of Rome or of Geneva, have had but brief and hypocritical existence. What human nature will and will not stand may be gathered from the past, and one thing most certain is that while man invents and accepts laws as means of guarding rights and safety, he will not accept them as a leaden clog upon his natural powers and aspirations.

There is a complete fallacy, as Aristotle long ago proclaimed, in asserting the absolute equality of men. That men should all be equal in the eye of the law is a rule received from Roman jurisconsults, and admitted even by those who do not practise it. But that man is equal to man in industry, capacity, and morals, that every man deserves to possess just as much and legislate just as much as every other man, is pestilent folly. The Athenian democrats carried out no such views. The French Jacobins, who had roared themselves hoarse with the cant of equality and fraternity, and had committed many crimes in the name of each, when it came to carrying out the said equality of brotherhood, "contrived," it has been humorously said, "to always make themselves

the elder brothers." The American democrats love high seats, and to be called "judge" and "honourable." Coleridge and Southey, in their youth, devised for their friends a settlement upon the banks of the Susquehanna, where all things should be equally divided. They called it a "Pantisocracy." As they grew older Pantisocratism was all forgotten. History further shows that, everywhere alike, there will always be Irreconcilables, Nihilists, persons who agitate and practise violence of tongue or hand, and whom it would be folly for any legislator to attempt to pacify.

I have said that human progress is to be estimated by thousands rather than by decades of years. The period *anno domini* is but a span, and we to-day, though generally superior to Greeks and Romans, are inferior to them in art and in a certain largeness of conception. We are not keener inquirers than the Athenians, nor better organizers than the Romans. I shall not disguise the fact that our constant boasting about this age of intellectual movement seems to me a ridiculous and ignorant boasting. Are we more eagerly speculative than Aristotle, or Bacon, or Locke, or than the French Encyclopædists before the Revolution? Our stock of scientific data is greater; our reasoning may therefore in some directions have a more practical basis and outcome; but, though our generation may stand out in the future as an epoch of peculiar industrial and mechanical progress, I incline to think that it will rather appear deficient than otherwise in the

matter of purely intellectual advance. Our morals, it will be said, have vastly improved. In certain sensual matters, yes; but in other ways not much. We have abolished slavery. It took 1,800 years of Christianity to bring that result about; but let it pass. We may congratulate ourselves. Nevertheless, only a few decades ago, the moral position of Europeans and Americans relatively to slavery was more unblushingly brutal than that of the pagans 2,000 years earlier. The Greeks fancied that intrinsic personal superiority made the institution natural and right; the Romans justified it to themselves by right of conquest. The modern planter simply stifled his conscience, bought poor helpless stolen negroes, and treated them like cattle. We cannot, therefore, merely in virtue of lapse of time, place ourselves on some different moral or intellectual plane from past ages, and disclaim instruction from them. What do they teach us?

The great use of historical study is for wisdom and life; it is to supply us with principles and warnings for our own times. "Is there anything whereof it may be said—See, this is new? It hath been already of old time which was before us." History, say the ancients, is the "mother of wisdom," the "teacher of life." There are many aphorisms pointing to this recognition of its true utility. Dionysius of Halicarnassus called history "philosophy teaching by examples." "History repeats itself." If, instead of parroting this expression as a piece of meaningless cant, we were to stop and think of it, we might, per-

haps, proceed to read history in order to see if it were true; and, finding it so, we might know the better how to deal with one of these recurrent phenomena. Buckle took up the strong position that the actions of men have the same uniformity of connection which physical events have, and no other; and that the laws of these uniformities can be inductively ascertained in the same way as the laws of the material world. Buckle's own exposition may be unsatisfactory, but that there are some such laws it is reasonable to believe. The past is no chapter of accidents, and the knowledge of it is knowledge of a very practical application. Lord Macaulay was not a profound philosopher, but he was a man of supreme common sense. His speeches in the House of Commons are, as we might expect, filled with historical allusions; his chief positions are taken up on historical arguments, and the sides he took were those which we now generally acknowledge to have been right. Now possibly his excellent common sense alone might have placed him on those sides; but it is none the less useful to note that common sense falls back on history. "One urgent reason," says Professor Seeley, "why politicians should study history is that they may guard themselves against the false historical analogies which continually mislead those who do not study history." We are in a community where everyone is a politician, and where everyone should examine whether an alleged analogy is true or false. We have persons among us who gloat over the separation of the American colonies from England,

and tell us that that separation is a precedent, a necessary precedent, for ourselves. What are we to say? Only, I presume, that, according to history, there is in our relations no circumstance which can justify us in comparing our position with theirs. To run away from home because we are cruelly used is a very different thing from spurning our mother because we are weaned.

There is, however, quite as much danger, or even more, of asserting that analogy does not exist when it does. "There will never," says Coleridge, "be wanting answers and explanations and specious flatteries of hope to persuade a people and its Government that the history of the past is inapplicable to their case. . . . I well remember that when the example of former Jacobins, as Julius Cæsar, Cromwell, and the like, were adduced in France and England at the commencement of the French Consulate, it was ridiculed as pedantry and pedant's ignorance to fear a repetition of usurpation and military despotism at the close of the enlightened eighteenth century. Even so, in the very dawn of the late tempestuous day, when the revolution of Corcyra, the proscriptions of the reformers, Marius and Cæsar, and the direful effects of the levelling tenets in the Peasants' War in Germany were urged on the Convention, the magi of the day, the true citizens of the world, gave us set proofs that similar results were impossible, and that it was an insult to so philosophic an age, to so enlightened a nation, to dare direct the public eye towards them as to lights of warning."

It seems to me that a necessary element in the training of a statesman should be this—that he should study history, not history of one people or of one country or of one age, but the history of human societies and polities; that he should trace the career of different forms of governments, systematizing their effects, their apparent points of strength or weakness; that he should examine periods of anarchy, their causes, conduct, and cure; that he should investigate the workings of legal codes, and note how far their abiding elements have had their roots in human nature; how far legislation has interfered well or ill with contractual dealings. The study of a life, you will say. Yes; and why should not a statesman study all his life? Why should it be considered enough equipment for a statesman that he should have vehement party prejudices, a thick skin, and physical endurance enough for an all-night sitting?

A danger to be feared from legislators untrained in history and unchecked by strong control is the danger not only of empirical but of excessive legislation, interfering with the liberty of the subject without necessity or wisdom. In modern as in ancient times we have law-makers who almost want to prescribe how the individual shall eat and drink. They attempt to reduce the interworkings of the social organization to a rigid mechanism in which the human instincts shall play little or no part. But history tells us that legislation has narrowed, not extended, its field. All the early codes had their ordinances touching religious and moral as well as

civil matters. To legislate for one was regarded as the function of the state as much as to legislate for the other. No advanced community holds these views now. The Puritan regulations only resulted in a violently immoral reaction under Charles II., and their fate in New England was little better. "Those," says Mr. John Morley, "who have thought about the matter most carefully and disinterestedly are agreed that in advanced societies the expedient course is that no portion of the community should insist on imposing its own will upon any other portion, except in matters which are vitally connected with the maintenance of the social union." These are the words of an advanced Liberal, but one whose advanced Liberalism is tempered by historical study. It is, of course, easy to answer that opinions will differ as to what matters do concern the maintenance of the social union. But, at least, it does not concern the maintenance of that union that, for instance, our shops should all compulsorily close at one rather than another of two reasonable hours. The empiric may say that he means to try the experiment. Well, when an empiric declares his willingness to deal off-hand with most complicated questions of economics and human nature, he reminds one of the person who, when asked whether he could play the fiddle, replied that he did not, but was "going to do his best."

Some time ago I mentioned the prevailing notion that democracy is the inevitable government of the future. To avoid being misjudged, I must premise

that I am a believer in a very broad basis of popular government. There is little chance of anyone successfully assailing the position of Aristotle, that the rule of the many rather than the few is right, inasmuch as, though man for man the many may be inferior to the select few, yet collectively they will be more wise and more virtuous. If what I say seems to provide argument against popular government, it will in reality only be against a weakly or unskilfully constituted form of democracy.

How do we mostly form our conceptions of the best polity? Is it not from *à priori* reasoning, from habituation, or from undefined sentiment? The English Conservative looks with disgust upon American democracy; the American democract looks with aggressive pity upon the "bloated monarchism" of Europe. Theoretically, there is much to be said for either side. But the contrast of view is mainly due to difference of habituation. Again, in some minds there prevails the sentiment of loyalty to the powers that be; in others, the sentiment of equality of rights. The prudent man will rather ask what experience has to say. Let us examine very briefly the chief facts in the history of democracy.

The two best known republics of antiquity were those of Athens and Rome. Both have emerged from despotism, and both have a remarkably brilliant career, the Athenian lasting some 200 years, the Roman 500. The constitution of Athens was overthrown by conquest from outside, the Roman by internal feuds. Concerning the Athenian democracy

we may gather as the salient matters for our purpose these facts: During the early period the people was in a measure controlled by certain aristocratic institutions; it was engrossed with one great idea, the idea of Grecian liberty; the citizens were of simple habits, loyal to leaders and to their country. Next, the aristocratical trammels are shaken off; circumstances of the Persian war have brought the state to unwonted influence and vigour; from wealth springs a magnificent outburst of creative art, from power springs a new idea, the idea of the predominance of a splendid Athens. At the most flourishing period of all, the people has yielded itself largely to the control of one great leader, Pericles, whom it trusts, and who happens to deserve its trust. A little later Pericles, the master-mind, is gone; worthless or unwise demagogues take his place; the people rushes recklessly into wars beyond its strength under incompetent generals chosen factiously; master of the political situation, the populace votes itself self-indulgences, and never knows a settled policy. From this time to the end we need not follow the weary story of vacillation, intrigue, and political corruption.

This outline is very roughly drawn; but, so far as it goes, I trust it is accurate. And it amounts to this, that so long as the Athenians were filled with a worthy sentiment, and so long as they were under salutary restraint, whether exercised by an enlightened body or by a master mind, their state was sound and prosperous; but when there was no authority to check them but their own—when, too, the national

idea had burnt itself out, they fell under the sway of factious leaders of narrow views, and there followed indulgence of hasty impulses, feeble efforts, and self-betrayal.

But, you will say, the Athenians were a peculiarly shifty people. What, then, of Rome? If, as we did with Athens, we try to gather the salient matters from the history of those five centuries, we must remember that the Roman state was all the time a conquering state, employing the vastest armies of antiquity. Had it been otherwise we cannot tell what its fate might have been. More than half the life of this great republic is one long struggle of the commons to free themselves more and more from the hegemony of the privileged orders. Now and again, when internal troubles or foreign wars made danger imminent, the whole people resigned its powers for a brief and definite term to a single dictator, who secured a new lease of safety and solidity for the state. Let us proceed to the form of government at the most admirable and strongest period of the republic. It was thus: While sovereignty lay nominally with the people—that is to say, while the people reigned—there was a specially enlightened body, the powerful senate, which really ruled. This great and mostly wise control was the secret of the success of Roman policy and Roman arms. But, unhappily, it was no part of the constitution; it was a usurpation, wise indeed, and partly sanctioned by prescription, but ever open to popular assault. And it was at length so assailed. Disputes about the

constitution issued in revolutions and counter-revolutions. Large armies were in various parts of the empire. Irregularities showed themselves, and authority proved unable to enforce its will. The result was civil wars and retaliatory proscriptions, till peace at any price became so necessary, and a successful general's power so irresistible, that the helpless, weary people accepted the rule of a military despot, Julius Cæsar, who began an autocracy more absolute than that from which the community had emerged 500 years before.

The bare existence of the community for so long a period says much for the possibilities of republican government. The solidity of Roman organization and success of Roman effort betoken special merit in the working of its *de facto* constitution. As with Athens, the verdict comes to this, that the check of the specially enlightened body or the specially enlightened man was the safeguard of the state. But with Rome there is this further lesson, that where large standing armies feel themselves distinct in interest from the people, and masters of the situation, there is imminent risk of the despotism of a military chief.

Let us look at France. The saying of Louis XIV. is a by-word, *L'état c'est moi* ("*I* am the state"). How soon was this doctrine overthrown by that other, of government "for and by the people"! There can be no question that the latter is the position of reason and justice. It triumphed at the Revolution. Democracy was established. Yet within

six years of the extreme measures of '93 the Corsican idol of the soldiery was the practically autocratic First Consul of France. "Since the introduction of political freedom into France," says Sir Henry Maine, "the democratic government has been three times overthrown by the mob of Paris, three times by the army, and three times by foreign invasion." But again we may be told the French are a specially fickle people. Is this so? Then how do we explain that long period during which the French remained so loyal to their monarchs, and that, too, under an intensity of suffering seldom paralleled in modern times? No; the revolutionaries had provided no workable system of restraints upon constitutional change; and, at the same time, while carrying on enormous wars with enormous enthusiasm, they made the army feel, as the Roman army felt, that it was the arbiter of politics.

But you will naturally direct your thoughts to the United States of America. What is to be said of this apparently decisive experiment? Well, first of all, I would say that, relatively to history, its duration has not yet been long. Nor do the corruptions of American politics lead to any feeling of finality or security of that democracy. In speaking of Athens, Rome, and France, I have indicated two chief causes of constitutional overthrow—lack of stringent checks when demagogism and self-seeking have demoralized the people's votes; and the existence of large standing armies, which may exalt a favourite leader to despotic powers. It is precisely

from these drawbacks that the United States are free. The constitution is admirably checked throughout by the federal system. To change an article in it is so elaborate a process, and requires such an overwhelming majority of federal congress and state legislatures, that the perpetration of sudden follies is impossible. The powerful senate is so selected that some sort of eminence in the members is assured. The President has greater power than an English sovereign. Mere demagogism can lay no touch upon the constitution. Moreover, that constitution itself was no ideal scheme, evolved, like Rousseau's, "from nature and based on reason." It was the British constitution amended and adapted; for the Washingtons and Hamiltons and Madisons recognized the essential doctrine that society must grow, and cannot be mechanically constructed.

Once more, America is no imperial state. It has no standing army worth the name. There is no danger of the military despot there, though Andrew Jackson's presidency once came perilously near it. But let America loosen its constitutional bands, let it burn for foreign wars and raise armies of dimensions proportionate with its size, and the fate of Rome will almost certainly become the fate of the United States.

My object, as I stated at the beginning, is not to collect all the various teachings which history seems to me to inculcate; it is only to point out some few of such lessons, and, if possible, to get our rising politicians to recognize that history is, in fact, an

essential to the training of the real statesman—of him who would fain approach the guardianship of the state duly equipped, and with a due sense of the magnitude of his task. I will, therefore, if you please, set forth in a desultory way certain other of these lessons which I seem to myself to find.

I would, for instance, direct the impatient revolutionary spirit to the fact that all successful or important reformations have taken long time, long preparation to bring about. Rome was not built in a day. A new theory with the salt of permanence in it has never been made palatable in a day. The Protestant Reformation took over three centuries to accomplish itself. This is not the popular notion. It is frequently supposed that Martin Luther posted his heretical document on the Wittenberg Church door, and, lo! the Christian world was severed into two great camps. The French Revolution did not originate with the States General of 1789. The sounder part of the revolutionary ideas had been spreading themselves half a century before. Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau had been teachers that made possible first a Mirabeau, and then a Robespierre and a Danton. Indeed, Michelet begins his history of the Revolution with Dante and Huss and the thinkers of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Christianity itself took nine centuries to cover Europe. There is no such thing as millions of people being suddenly polarized by a single spark of thought, however divinely true. It is only error, like disease,

which is readily contagious; truth establishes itself slowly, like returning health.

Now, it seems to me that some of the novel ideas which are working in small but vigorous sections of society to-day make more demands upon our capacity for mental change than Christianity made upon the Pagan world or the Reformation upon the Catholic world. Some of these ideas may have truth in them. One of the lessons of history is to make us careful in assertion. Contemporaries have scarcely ever realized the significance of a thought-movement. Truth does not necessarily lie in the multitude of believers, and there have always been individuals—Buddha, Socrates, Bacon—in advance of their times. The scholar in his study, the philosopher in his garden, has often had a keener perception of social wants than the active man of affairs. Some of these movements, then, may have truth in them. On the other hand, they may not. There have been entirely false movements which, as Gamaliel would say, "have not been of God." To what lesson do these facts point? To this, that, on the one hand, fullest freedom of discussion should be granted to every social scheme; but, on the other, the least outbreak of lawlessness in its behalf should be unflinchingly suppressed. As truth can never be silenced by forbidding it a hearing, so it does not require violence to propagate it. John Stuart Mill gives the reasons for freedom of discussion. The new opinion may be true or partly true; and, in any case, the only way of preventing truths from becoming mere meaningless

prejudices is to have them vigorously assailed. If, therefore, small bodies of persons have a banner with some strange device of economics or politics, let them freely wave it, until by any form of violence they seek to realize all at once their particular conception of the millennium. They may be right; if so, they must be satisfied with the legitimate process of gradually impregnating the general mind.

And, apart from economics, it is unfortunately necessary still to remind men of the duty of tolerance in the matter of belief. Greater religious tolerance must inevitably come to the man who has any capacity for realizing history. He will find abundant instances of two opposite intolerances, and neither in the right. He will see that there has been no lengthened period in which a faith existed homogeneously over any considerable space. He will note that morality has but partially depended on the particular creed a man professed to hold, that Socrates and Sakya-muni had an ideal of practical morality not differing essentially from ours. He will survey the panorama of schisms and sects of old, and will realize the possibility of a future time when historical observers may similarly contemplate ourselves. He will see the old pagan faiths broken into philosophic sects, whose charity towards each other was like that of Christian sects to-day, and who would have deserved, *mutato nomine*, the sarcasm, "See how these Christians love one another!" He will find the less active-minded part of humanity from time to time reforming their beliefs, by Mazdeism, Con-

fucianism, Buddhism; while the more active-minded Europeans accept the solution of Christianity. So he will find severance of church from church, west from east, Protestant from Romish; and, again, Protestantism splitting into all conceivable and inconceivable sects. These are superficial facts to record; but the wonder is that good people refuse to learn the lesson they proclaim—that there is no finality with dogmatic creeds, nor do morality and principle require it.

There are many earnest people who agonize in heart at the spread of scepticism. Now, of the unutterable wretchedness of atheism I have nothing to say. But scepticism means attitude of inquiry, and one would in all else think such an attitude was good. Does history console us or alarm us? It tells us, I believe, that an era of scepticism, of earnest inquiry, has always been the precursor of an era of regenerated and revitalized religion. History tells us what Socrates tells us, that man is a religious being. He has always been found, when an existing creed ceased to animate, providing himself with new guiding principles of faith and hope and conduct.

Some of you may say, "But, if this is the way you talk about politics and society and religion and tolerance and possessing one's soul in patience, your historical study seems merely to lead to a position of indolent indifferentism." Not at all. Tolerance and large concession are not incompatible with the most strenuous action. "Every matter hath two handles," but nevertheless one of them must be grasped, and

grasped manfully. Because one listens patiently to the other side, he will none the less in the day of action have his decision ready one way or the other. And is it less likely to be the right way than when it is followed through the mere accident of habituation or prepossession? The historical student should, indeed, above all others, seize strongly upon one of the two handles of a matter. One of the plainest lessons he has learned is "that to be weak is miserable," and not only miserable, but ruinous.

Another lesson is that of the power of an idea, of a great principle, working in a people; and the warning that goes with it is, that so long as the idea is a living and informing national idea, the result is rapid progress; but when the idea loses its reality, loses its stimulating power, the same people may present a spectacle of weakness and decay. We hear much about racial differences. We may safely admit the diverse effects of blood, but they are commonly exaggerated. Everyone knows, or should know, that there is no inconsiderable Celtic element in the English blood, and a very large Teutonic element in the French blood. Everyone knows, or should know, that the Lowland Scot is of exactly the same race with, at least, the northern Englishman. We are apt to attribute certain moral or intellectual peculiarities to racial differences where racial differences are but slight or do not exist. If the Lowland Scotch qualities diverge so widely from the English, they do so only because of the divergence of the ideas that have been encouraged by each. Whether

a people is warlike, inventive, or inert depends less on race than on the nature of its ideas, and these in turn largely depend on circumstances. Many a weak man or woman has been braced up by an enthusiasm to endure or even to court martyrdom; so, with a similar intensity of faith in an absorbing principle, a people has shown, sometimes for one generation sometimes for many, an immense zeal, and put forth an immense effort, of which it was not suspected capable, and which it was unable to maintain. The Saracens, seized with the Mahometan enthusiasm, emerged from an obscure corner of Arabia and spread their empire from the Indus to the Atlantic. To-day their descendants are thought capable of nothing great. The little Greek states, possessed with the indomitable principle of Grecian freedom, gloriously conquered the mightiest force the Persian could assemble. Yet in less than seventy years they were severally intriguing miserably with that beaten foe to buy his help against each other. The Jews are a remarkable instance of a people in whom a great idea, the theocratic principle, has worked marvellous things. The Roman was invincible so long as he felt and bore himself as *Civis Romanus*, a citizen sharing in the immense majesty of the Roman name. After the Revolution, the enthusiasm of the French for their newborn ideals and regenerated state was such that they readily took up arms almost against the world. Call their enthusiasm patriotism, or call it chauvinism if you like—trueness or falseness of the principle matters not—there is the fact of

the stupendous effort, and, except for the vastness of the undertaking, the stupendous success. The Germans have their idea, inviolability of the Fatherland, perhaps also its ascendancy in learning and in war. The idea of England once was to be the helper of the oppressed, the vindicator of human freedom. What is its idea now? Is it *propositi tenax*, willing to sacrifice near expediencies to some great and high resolve? We cannot trust entirely to the effect of blood, to racial virtues. What the Anglo-Saxon ancestor was under certain motive influences is no proof of what we shall or can be without them.

And this sudden and powerful influence of the idea leads me to another warning, to wit, that in the movements of nations it is largely the unexpected which befals. The great conquerors of the ancient East, Assyria and Egypt, were not destroyed the one by the other, but by a new and unsuspected power, the Medes and Persians. I have already mentioned the Saracenic outbreak. An Asiatic irruption into Europe left Hungary peopled by a wholly alien stock, and another—the Turkish—swallowed the Greek Empire. Imperial Rome fell before the despised barbarian Goth. The Romans turned suddenly into a nautical people during the Punic wars; the Egyptians did the same after the descents of certain mysterious northern fleets. Of late, in our own half of the world, one country has sprung at a bound from barbarism to civilization—I mean Japan. What may come of the awakening in China we cannot tell. The British are dominant in India to-

day, and have been so for over a century. But for more than three hundred years the Romans were in Britain, and thought that they had come to stay for ever: perhaps the last people the earlier Roman occupants had feared were the barbarian Germans from over the North Sea. Now, it is quite likely that superior persons will maintain that these facts, while very interesting in their way, are of no bearing upon or use to us. Possibly so. Yet it is well to adopt all provisions for future strength, of which provisions, perhaps, a mighty federation is not the least.

I might go on in this way from lesson to lesson of history. I might show by instances of Judæa, Athens, Venice, Genoa, England, how national greatness requires no territorial greatness. I might show how that old fable of the bundle of sticks applies to the federation of states, by the instance of the Jewish people, which gradually sank before the neighbouring powers from the day when Jeroboam's men raised their secession cry, "To your tents, O Israel;" by the instance of the commonwealths of Greece, which, when united, destroyed the enormous Persian hosts, but which were conquered later one by one by a comparatively petty prince because of their fratricidal feuds; by the instance of that sinister Roman policy, which, summed up in "*Divide et impera*," acted successfully in east and west and north and south; by the instance of a disunited Poland; by a contrast between a weak overrun Germany of little states and a united German

Empire which sways the policy of Europe. I might, once more, show how small have been the causes of wearisome and bloody feuds—how Big-Endians have slaughtered Little-Endians for years and years, and how ultimately Guelfs and Ghibellines knew as little why they fought as those Irish factions who "broke each other's heads all over Ireland about the colour of a cow." But for one evening's consideration we have enough. I will therefore end by briefly recalling certain points to which I have given some prominence.

History teaches the impossibility of realizing extreme socialistic plans. It teaches the futility of over-legislation. It teaches that violent revolutions, short and sharp, lead mostly to worse reaction. It teaches tolerance and slowness in realizing reformations. Concerning our form of government it has warnings we cannot despise. This community of ours is practically a democracy. It has established the rule of the many. Good. Democracy is the form of rule which best fits with a natural sense of justice. It gives a free career to talent, and this is its signal merit. The needed warning, however, is that eras of unlimited democracy have not proved necessarily eras of advance, nor have they had permanence. Now "history," says Mr. John Morley, "is a great *pis-aller*, a prodigious wasteful experiment, from which a certain number of precious results have been extracted, but which is not now, and never has been at any other time, a final measure of all the possibilities of the time." That is to say,

it might all have been so much better if people had only known. Well, we have the benefit of others' experience, and it seems a pity not to use that experience for our own profit. The "prodigious wasteful experiment" shows that democracy, however just and reasonable in theory, has peculiar risks which render its existence peculiarly frail.

Democracies have always been born of some sort of struggle; their initial guidance has always been in the hands of certain greater men, who were made leaders because they *were* greater men. The early times of democracies have therefore been times of wisdom and strength of counsel, political probity, social progress. But afterwards the path to leadership lies through smaller questions, meaner interests. The chosen are chosen less and less for intellectual and moral capacity, and more and more for party vehemence—one might say virulence. The best minds do not find their way to the legislative bodies. Demagogism and short-sighted views prevail, and counsel is "darkened" by "words without understanding." This has been the usual career of democracies. Is history to repeat itself? I only ask that our citizens should look this question squarely in the face. I suggest no specifics. But this much I say, that, for the order, progress, and permanence of democracy, it is entirely necessary to educate the people by all possible means of education, not only by the common school teaching of facts in childhood, but by every elevating influence and reason-training process of art and science in maturity.

Not only should the state do this with a liberal hand, but every specially enlightened citizen and every wealthy citizen should of himself, as a matter even of personal interest, act when and how he can to improve the intellectual and moral powers of those whose talents or advantages are less than his. It is not enough to leave the moral training to the Church, and the intellectual training to the school, and then to lament over the ignorance and vices of the voting populace.

And our legislators should be chosen in some wise way which will ensure principle, loyalty, capacity, and make them a body of light and leading, not of passion or obstruction. To suggest that the present local and party method is a false one will seem Utopian to the so-called practical man. To suggest a safer method would be to invite him to call me an unpractical doctrinaire. I am not at all afraid of these reproaches, but such suggestions are now beyond my province.

Again, democracies cannot endure unless they have a rigorous system of checks upon licentious tampering with the constitution. History tends to show that the outcry against senates and upper houses is an outcry to which no serious statesman should lend an ear; he should only the more resolve that such a cry is a sign of threatening dissolution, and that it becomes his duty to more and more secure the firm authority of the threatened check.

Let me end by saying that, despite the warnings I discover in history, I cannot but most firmly believe

in the gradual perfecting of human society. The golden age has not passed. I cannot pretend to "dip into the future" and see "the vision of the world and all the wonder that shall be," but believe, despite the present lamentations over the scepticism and supposed moral indifferentism of our times, that the true spiritual capacity of men is at least as great as it has been at any past epoch. The age is merely correcting its compasses, in order "to find its east" with more certainty.

"New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward who would keep abreast of truth."

THE TEACHINGS OF TRAVEL.

Some time ago, in an address upon the subject of "Culture and Cant," I mentioned that among the most valuable aids to culture we must include travel; and, mindful at the time of certain crude utterances on the part of native-born Australians, I ventured to say that, though their association engaged my sympathies, it had a great and palpable weakness. The weakness lies in this, that, from the nature of the case, the native-born Australians must, as a body, be the least-travelled among us. I entertained, and entertain more and more, a fear that our rising generation is forming a most exaggerated estimate of the relative importance of our country and ourselves in the world; that it is filling itself with too complacent a satisfaction with our own virtues and ideals; or, in other words, that it is encouraging a habit of self-congratulation and self-assertion, which may greatly injure the future history of our country in the evolution of its society and its internal and external policies. The remedy for this mental infirmity, I said, lies in culture, through reading, reflection, discussion, conversation, and, finally,

travel—observant travel among peoples older, more powerful, more populous, or possessing a greater aggregate of political and social wisdom and experience than ourselves. This branch of the association has done me the honour to ask me to treat of this educational, this corrective agent—travel—in particular.

I shall, if you please, deal with the subject from an entirely general platform, in its general human interest, and not from a specially Australian point of view. I conceive this to be the wish of the society. Let us, then, ask ourselves the simple question, "What good does a man get from travel, and how does he get it?" and only incidentally, when occasion arises for illustration from ourselves or application to ourselves, let us ask the narrower question, "What particular good can an Australian get from travel?" There is, I am aware, an obvious disadvantage embarrassing one who, not being an Australian native, speaks on such a question before Australian natives. There is a danger that he may unwittingly and unwillingly gall their vanity by insufficient praise or by implied dispraise. But we are not here to praise or to dispraise any country. We are here from a desire to see things as they are, and to learn to make the best of them and the best of ourselves. The objects of this association are, one must confess, not very definitely understood outside; but I apprehend that one chief object for which you band together is precisely this, to see things as they are among ourselves and among other peoples, and, possessed of this just-

ness of vision, to work for the improvement of this country and the elevation of its citizens. How will travel help us to do this?

The doctrine that travel is good has always prevailed widely. You are aware that it has been laid down theologically that the criterion of a true article of belief is that it should satisfy the condition, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*—that it has always, everywhere, and by everybody been held good. The belief in the utility of travel could very well stand the application of this test. Travel is universally regarded as the crown of a liberal education. A "travelled" man is spoken of with a certain respect in virtue of some superiority which he is supposed to have gained from what he has seen and heard. The same feeling, I suppose, was at the bottom of the old German custom, according to which a handicraftsman, after serving his apprenticeship, was made to spend another period of pupilage—his Wanderjahre—in going to and fro, working among strange places and strange people.

There have been expressed, it is true, a few depreciations of travel, as of everything else. Socrates, or rather Plato, thought little of its usefulness; but it should be remembered that, in his day, the Greeks fancied themselves an absolutely superior people, with nothing to learn from the barbarians, who were merely a foil for the setting of the Hellenic gem. Addison, in the *Spectator*, pretends to regard foreign travel as chiefly productive of coxcombry and affectation; yet this unfavourable statement is

subsequently largely qualified, and was plainly prompted by the immediate exigencies of an essay directed against certain foolish innovations in the fashion of dress and behaviour. According to some well-known lines of the poet Cowper—

> "A dunce that has been sent to roam
> Excels a dunce that has been kept at home."

Cowper, however, had never travelled himself, and, moreover, it is not with dunces that we are now concerned. I have thought it fair to record these contrary votes, and I will join to them the fact that Emerson also speaks slightingly of travel. Yet, when we find this same Emerson himself travelling twice to England, observing English character and English customs, and thinking his observations instructive enough for publication, we find it difficult to reconcile his theory with his practice. We may safely say that the few opposition votes in the assembly of the sages do little to counterbalance that general consensus of ancient and modern judgment, which tells us, with Shakspere, that "Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits." Whom does Homer put forward as the type of prudence and sagacity, as the man who always succeeds where others fail? It is Ulysses, the man "who saw the cities of many men and got to know their mind." He is the man of many resources and ready judgment. The motto "*Ne te quæsiveris extra*," has few supporters in literature.

Yet I do not preach passive acquiescence in any

tradition, however old, however well supported with a "great cloud of witnesses." The ultimate question will persistently suggest itself, "But is it so, and why is it so?"

Here I will ask you to note that the exact subject of my remarks is the *teachings* of travel. The interest and pleasure of it lie outside my scope. All the abundant delights in the choicest and most marvellous scenes of natural beauty; all the eager enjoyment excited by the novelty of foreign life and customs; all the priceless sentiments evoked by the contemplation of the monuments of ancient glory and grandeur; all the intense satisfaction of beholding with one's very eyes the scenes that have grown familiar in books—all these I am in duty bound to pass over. Not, indeed, that these contemplations are without a kind, and valuable kind, of teaching. It is impossible to stand in Greece or Italy, where

> "Poetic fields encompass us around,
> And still we seem to tread on classic ground,"

without being reminded that the nineteenth century is, after all, not everything admirable, and that we may very well abate some of our modern self-conceit. One can hardly look upon such a city as Athens or the tinier Weimar without having the conviction borne in upon him that, after all, it is not acres but human brains that make a community great. One can hardly traverse the deserted regions of Egypt and Assyria, strewed with their prodigious monuments, without having the salutary lesson, "*Sic*

transit gloria mundi," impressed upon his mind as a salutary corrective. Yet these lessons of historical suggestion, though most valuable, are not exactly the lessons of which you expect me to speak to-night.

Again, I must premise that there are different conceptions of travel; there are travellers and travellers. There are those who travel with the seeing eye and the hearing ear, observant, receptive, docile. And there are those who travel with a mind in a perpetual attitude of aggressiveness, full of prejudice and preconception, determined to wonder at nothing, to admire nothing, still less to learn anything. There have been not a few such travellers from our own midst. It is no uncommon thing to read of a visitor to Europe being interviewed on his return, and it occasionally happens that his first words are these, "I have seen no finer street than Collins-street;" and beneath all his comments, especially if they are perforce complimentary to the foreign land, there seems to be running in a kind of qualificatory or protesting strain that same undersong, "I have seen no finer street than Collins-street." I have known of one case where all that the visitor to London could find to say was that "it seemed a badly laid-out town." Well, ladies and gentlemen, there can be no reasonable objection to a comparison of streets nor to a criticism on the ground-plan of London, but when the sum and substance of a traveller's observation amounts simply to this, I think the poet Cowper's remark applies well, and that the "dunce who has been sent to roam excels the

dunce who has been kept at home." Such superficial travelling is not the travelling of Ulysses. He not only "saw the cities," but "got to know the mind" of the peoples. There we have it in a nutshell. When European visitors come among us, and are whirled through our country in a special train lined with satin, they do not even see our cities, still less do they get to know our minds. When they content themselves with the talk of one set of politicians at the banquet table, they do not get to know much that is worth knowing; and when they go back whence they came and indite their impressions of us in what they call a book, we see plainly that they have learned nothing of our thoughts as a people or of the merits of our institutions. And so it is with our own travellers to Europe. I set little value, little practical value, upon the travel of one of us, who steps upon an ocean steamer here, rushes through India and Egypt, "doing" them, as the vulgar term goes, then settles like a butterfly on this town and that of Italy, "doing" the monuments, picture-galleries, and museums, staying short whiles at exclusive hotels, providing himself with a set of phrases about art, architecture, and antiquities as a stock-in-trade for the conversation of society, but without real improvement or storage of mind for his own or his country's use. I do not say such travel is without a sort of use of an æsthetic kind. Certainly it has its intense enjoyments, but it is not the sort of travel which instructs to any practical end. For this instruction we must pass among the people, in their

homes, their shops, their factories ; in the streets, the cafés, and the theatres. We must inspect their public and private life, their institutions, their arts and sciences; we must be on the watch for things to be learned and things to be unlearned. This is travel in the sense in which I use the word.

Generally speaking, the prime use of such travel as this is to secure a standard of measurement outside ourselves, a standard whereby to measure the extent of our civilization. Most peoples, civilized or savage, are satisfied with their own culture, because comparisons are not continually forced upon them. That one *is* contented with it is, therefore, no proof that it is so good as it should be and might be made to be. The chief object of every nation in its legislation, in its social and moral code, should be to advance its civilization ; and it will do this only by clearing itself of the clog of patriotic ignorance and conceit, by the choice of proper ideals of life, and by readily absorbing all new lessons in politics, manners, education, arts, sciences, and manufactures. That is to say, it will endeavour to see itself as it really is and other peoples as they really are, choosing from all possible sources not only whatsoever things are useful, but also whatsoever things are pure, amiable, and of good report. In brief, it will gather to itself whatsoever lessons tend to make human life more happy and healthy and material prosperity more prosperous.

In the first place, then, travel is the great corrective of patriotic ignorance and conceit. There are intertwined with our earliest recollections certain

notions connected with our country, our race, and our religion, notions which are as frequently wrong as right, but which have always formed part of our belief, and have come to be axioms out of all questioning. These earliest notions are the hardest to eradicate. Among them is the belief of every child in every nation that he belongs to the best of all peoples, best in that direction in which the national ideals happen to lie. If a savage, he is brought up to believe his people the most warlike and terrible. If a member of a civilized community, that vestige of savagery still remains indeed; he is still led to think that one man of his people is physically worth three or more of any other; but he will have other ideals, in which he will fancy his nation to share most largely. Perhaps it is the most honest and straightforward nation, as the English claim to be; perhaps it is the most progressive people, as the Americans fancy themselves; perhaps the people of the completest civilization in point of social life and manners, which is the particular foible of the French. I need not illustrate these huge assumptions any further. It is too well known that every people is so calmly convinced of its superiority to all other peoples, in some one or several respects, that to question the fact from within is regarded as brutal iconoclasm, if not as a sort of unpatriotic blasphemy. Add to this that natural love of the native soil and the native tongue, which no man can or need analyse. These, and the innate desire to appear well in our own eyes and in those of others, constitute that inferior sort

of patriotism which is commonly paraded as a virtue. For myself, I neither call this patriotism nor yet a virtue. Patriotism, to my mind, is not an idle conceit of our country, instilled no one knows how, and based on very questionable data. No! Patriotism is the earnest desire to serve our country, to work for its improvement in all the ways in which it stands in need of improvement, and—if need be—to die for its sake. No man can do this rightly unless he first clearly perceives wherein his civilization is strong and wherein it is weak, and the best way to learn this is by travel. There have, indeed, been thinkers who have spun ideal constitutions, ideal civilizations, out of their own brains. Plato has done it. More has done it in the "Utopia," Bacon in the "New Atlantis." But the constitution evolved by the idealist might be an entirely unworkable constitution, or a very uncomfortable constitution for the happiness of a people who are not idealists. Ideals when put in practice not unfrequently break down. The only solid improvement of legislation and society lies in the gradual application to them of principles and methods which have been found successful elsewhere, or for which a successful analogue—or at least a successful argument—is to be found somewhere in operation.

The other sort of patriotism, which consists in self-laudation and self-conceit, is a positive mischief. It prevents us doing justice to the excellences of other countries. It seals the eye to what is superior in them. It encourages the worship of pernicious

fetishes. If we make ourselves like those wretched recluses who are for ever contemplating their own navel, we must necessarily get false notions of our material importance, and of the value of our own virtues; and the consequence is an assumption of superiority which is not only unwarranted, but which may have disastrous practical results. The Franco-German war of 1870 was largely due to the patriotic conceit, the chauvinism, of the French, who, as a nation, knew nothing of the military resources of Germany, altogether underrated them, and vastly magnified their own. When they perambulated the streets of Paris, shouting "*à Berlin*," their mental pictures of France and Frenchmen, Germany and Germans, were all distorted and out of perspective. They had no standard of measurement, and they did not get it till the Germans themselves brought it home to them. Had they seen themselves as the Germans saw them, and the Germans as they were, the war which ended so disastrously for them would certainly not have begun in 1870. France would have learned something even from its enemy.

I have chosen this as the most obvious modern instance, not because the French have a monopoly of patriotic conceit. China once thought itself able to resist the combined power of England and France. The English themselves are largely endowed with self-approbation of a somewhat obtrusive kind. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am an Englishman, and, I believe, as patriotic as most; but I have observed my fellow-countrymen abroad as well as at

home, and it would be a curious thing for me to stand here reproving patriotic ignorance, and meanwhile to show a great amount of it myself by seeing only good in my own compatriots. The average Englishman believes in things English, and only in things English. He stalks through the world, his own possessions and other peoples' possessions, with the air of the "just man made perfect." He seems to be always saying to himself, "*Civis Romanus sum*," to be thanking God every day that he is an Englishman. In his view it is sufficient argument against any custom of society, any view of life, any procedure of policy, to say that it is un-English; it may be a frivolous French notion, or a pedantic German notion, or a smart Yankee notion, but it is not English, and that is enough. Again, the ordinary Englishman is an impertinent traveller. In France or Italy he is apt to treat the French or Italians as foreigners, forgetting that he is himself the foreigner. He is more inclined to pass remarks than to learn something of use to himself and his own country. Yet, if that same man were to travel in the receptive spirit, if he were to mingle and converse with the ordinary folk of the countries he visits, he would, as the advertisements say, learn something to his advantage. He would find that his exalted view of England is not wholly shared, that it is seriously and in manifold respects modified by other peoples, even by peoples whom he thinks sufficiently low in the scale of nations to content themselves with the humble *rôle* of hero-worshippers. I was in Brazil in

the year 1880, and was considerably taken aback by the fact that persons who could speak both English and French would even address an Englishman in French rather than in his own tongue, because of the "superiority of the French over the English, both as a military and a social power." I do not consider that this was good manners on the part of my Brazilian friends, but I do consider that it taught me something. It taught me, for instance, that a country cannot go on bragging and blustering and at the same time purchasing peace at any price without falling in the estimation of other nations.

Foreigners of sense are quite ready to admit the solid excellences of many English institutions, but they by no means find them all admirable, and they by no means see in the English themselves such perfect patterns of probity and virtue. We, for instance, are always assured that in Central Asia Russia is a dishonest aggressor and England is the champion of justice, whose part it is to play St. George to Russia's dragon. But what do other nations think? I take up the *Revue des deux Mondes*, which is by no means an Anglophobic magazine, and which in point of critical and literary quality excels all productions of the kind in any country, and I find that the French mind sees the case thus:— "The two countries, Russia and England, pursue the same means, a rectification of frontiers, a proceeding eminently elastic and free from scruples; both excite disturbance among the neighbouring peoples so that they may send troops to restore order." This is the

view of the best French mind concerning our conduct in Burmah and Russian conduct in Turkestan. I do not say it is the true view, but I do say that it is very wholesome to see ourselves in these matters as others see us. There is a German view of the English in the great poet and thinker, Goethe—"The English are pedants." Yet Goethe was well-disposed towards England for the most part. Are we pedants? Let us ask a great American, Emerson. He, speaking of Wordsworth, describes him as having "a narrow and very English mind." Are then "narrow" and "very English" synonymous terms? Perhaps we are not schemers like the Russians; perhaps we are not pedants or characterized by narrowness of mind; yet it is well for us to know that we have a faculty for appearing so to our fellow men in other countries, and it is well for us further to remember that their practical policy, not to speak of their sentiments, towards us may be very seriously affected by the manner in which we as a nation impress them. These are quotations from literature, but literature cannot in this respect inform us with a thousandth part of the certainty with which travel instructs.

To England, above all countries, the gift of seeing herself and others as they are, is essential. With colonies so variously situated, with so many points of contact with foreign powers and foreign feelings, with peoples of all degrees of civilization or savagery beneath her sway, in Ireland, the colonies, India, and the isles, it is manifestly necessary that the rulers of

England should rid themselves of patriotic ignorance. They should understand all these peoples, not by hearsay, not through books and statistics, but through travel, which shall both behold their cities and also get to know their minds. If England is satisfied that she is just, she should also (as Matthew Arnold has said) learn how to be amiable, and amiability in government comes not from a knowledge of statistics, but from an intimate knowledge of minds and manners. In former days, America was lost to her because she was ignorant of the life and sentiments and strength of so remote a dependency. Now-a-days she is endeavouring to bring herself into actual contact with her colonies. She is adjusting the perspective of her mental picture. Her statesmen will come more and more to see us as we are, our statesmen will go more and more to see her as she is.

I have not spared my own native land ; it is therefore only fair that I should not speak smooth things of this land of my adoption. If there are multitudes of people in the British Isles whose knowledge of the colonies is one of statistics and atlases only, on the other hand it is plain to see that there are multitudes of people growing up here whose knowledge of the British Isles is one of books and hearsay only. I do not hesitate to say that the whole perspective of these persons is likely to be wrong, and that such knowledge is wholly insufficient for dealing with immense questions like that of separation, more or less remote. But these are great subjects, and we must not make the text of this discourse a peg on

which to hang a discussion of imperial federation or separation.

How few of our conceptions of national types are at all near the mark! The European notion of American civilization is but very partially true. On the other hand, an untravelled American refuses to understand that there can be anything in older realms superior to his own resources and the machinery of his own institutions. The untravelled European has a vulgar notion of American life and culture, which Mr. J. Russell Lowell represents in this form: —"A country without traditions, without ennobling associations, a scramble of parvenus, with a horrible consciousness of shoddy running through politics, manners, art, literature—nay, religion itself." And then Mr. Lowell goes on to tell us that when two millions of Americans were fighting with all the heroism of antiquity in the civil war, the European began to rub his eyes and say, "You know, fellows don't fight like that for a shop-till." And so we might go on quoting the crude opinions of nation upon nation, and it would be no difficult task to show how peoples are galled and piqued into habitual enmity by unjust caricatures produced by patriotic ignorance and intolerance.

I need not pursue this part of my subject much further. There is, however, one illustration I cannot exclude. The Englishman, proud in his somewhat sombre and rigid ethical attitude, is apt to think of France as one great hotbed of all the immoralities of Zolaism. He fancies French life to be as tainted as

its literature. Yet we need not sojourn long in France to find that this is not true, but that there is among the French, especially among the working classes, a domestic life of a more pleasing and more amiable kind than among the same classes in many parts of England. We may notice, too, a general impression that England is the home of wealth and solidity, and France of cheap show and frivolity. Yet the working man of France is, as a rule, a cleaner, more thrifty, and more respectable man than his compeer in Glasgow, Liverpool, or Birmingham.

I have spoken most of England, because it is best known to us, and because we can all remember what shapes the patriotic conceit of our childhood took. But all countries have had and have their share of this chauvinism, this spreadeagleism, this "contemplation of their own navel." The Jews have always thought of themselves as a chosen people of the Lord. The Greeks and Romans looked upon all peoples but themselves as *barbari*, mere babblers of inarticulate sounds. The earlier we go back the more pronounced is this national vanity; the more men learn to travel the less pronounced it grows. Even the very planet has lost its self-conceit, and no longer poses as the hub of the universe. The earliest Greeks were a circle of light about the Delphian centre of the habitable world; round them was a gradually darkening penumbra of semi-civilization; outside of this was the blackness of the darkness of absolute barbarism, tenanted by beings who were scarcely human even in shape. And what does this mean? Simply

that so far as they came into actual contact with other peoples by travelling among them or receiving travellers from them the Greeks sank something of their faith in themselves, found something to learn from Phœnicians and Egyptians and Persians; or, in other words, that, as the mathematicians put it, their self-conceit was in inverse proportion to their knowledge of the rest of the world.

The exclusive Chinese long regarded, and provincially still regard, their empire as the "celestial" empire, and outsiders like ourselves as barbarians. So was it with the Japanese. Accordingly China and Japan, despite the natural abilities of their peoples, lagged centuries behind the advancing world of the west. But now that they admit travellers and teachers among them, they are on the way to a rush of civilization, of social and material advancement, which is becoming no less than a revolution in the whole condition of humanity in those countries.

I have pointed out some erroneous items in the English estimate of France. The French estimate of England is no more sound. To them we are a nation of shopkeepers, occupying a miserable country stuffed with factory chimneys from end to end; a people devoid of taste and art, possessing a literature chiefly marked by *la brutalité*. Until the seventeenth century we were despised barbarians; but from the time of Louis XIV. Frenchmen who could see and think began to travel in England—Buffon, Helvetius, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire—great writers and powers among their countrymen. The consequence

was a remarkable shifting in the French view of English customs and institutions, and, more important still, a great shifting in the customs and institutions of France itself. There is little doubt that the French Revolution was greatly prompted by what travelled Frenchmen had seen of higher liberty and law in more happy lands than their own, and especially in the country of the English barbarians.

You may be saying, "This is, no doubt, all very philosophical and all very true; but patriotic vanity is in human nature, and though you drive out nature with the pitchfork of philosophy, it will still return." To which I can only reply that pride goes before a fall, and that, though pride well-grounded is a happy and comfortable thing, self-applause ill-grounded is the greatest bar to progress. Socrates despaired of one who could not be brought to see his own ignorance. Little hope can be entertained for a country which makes its own vanity the measure of civilization. After all, it is the "meek" who shall "inherit the earth."

We here in Australia, through our geographical extent and isolation, are very apt to develop patriotic ignorance on a dangerous scale. We are likely to talk ourselves into believing, and to instil into our children the belief, that we are the most intelligent and best-governed people in the world, with the most wonderful of futures before us. This may be so; but then, again, it may not be so; and it is for an association like this to ask itself the plain question, "Because we happen to be here in this fair land and this large

land, does it, therefore, follow that there is not somewhere a fairer and a larger land? Because we have certain ways and notions, are these necessarily the best ways and notions, even for us? Have we sucked all the honey from every flower of civilization, and can we yet retire into our hive to make the most of it?" I should not have ventured to speak in this way if I had not perceived a growing impatience of instruction and help from outside, a growing exclusiveness which may prove most prejudicial to the advancement of this country; and I am sure you will believe me when I say that, though I am only an Australian citizen, and not an Australian native, I have but one desire to-night, and that is to aid in the future career of this country, which is my home as it is yours.

And, next, travel is the best agent for producing a virtue which the coming years will more and more demand—the virtue of tolerance. Men will insist on being less and less shackled by rigid creeds, customs, and views of life. I am not going to do anything so foolish as to deal with the religious aspect of this topic in this place and at this time. There is a tolerance and a freedom of thought outside the domain of religion, in our habits of living and our choice of ideals. So long as a man is more than a machine for making money he will struggle to escape from "*was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine*"—the common rut that confines us all. A particular nation is disposed to set itself certain models of living—certain conventions of thinking and behaviour—to

which all its members are more or less compelled to conform. These national ideals are not always very high, not unfrequently they are very low. Yet there they are, the political and social creeds are there, and it is always a sore thing, and often a dangerous thing, to break with the general creed. So one people, entertaining an inherited belief in certain ways of conduct and thinking, is mostly contemptuous of, or even tyrannical towards, the ways of conduct and thinking in which another people believes. Personal behaviour which to us is normal appears to an American arrogant, to a Frenchman bearish; conduct which to a Frenchman is civility is to an Englishman affectation, to an American it is "monkey tricks;" and so nation goes on misjudging nation simply because it measures by the unreasonable standard of its own practice. Something is, no doubt, due to natural instincts of race, but much more to the contracted sympathies caused by the narrowness of the parochial, or, at least, provincial, groove into which each people falls. It is only by travel or by much association with foreigners that we can fully surmount the barriers raised by such externals, such unessentials, as those of dress, gesture, language, and complexion. These are films to true vision. The question of civilization is whether the man is a happier and nobler man, not whether his habits and beliefs are English. If a Cæsar or Pericles or Charlemagne or Shakspere were restored to us as he lived, I fancy it would be difficult to avoid some feeling of condescension towards a person with

such a dress, such a language, and such ignorance of the usages of modern society. Yet our better judgment would assure us that the man, the soul, the brain beneath could be no subject for our patronizing.

Again, we are convinced that all religions but our own are absurd; we cannot understand sane beings possessing any other, if they possess one at all. Yet the Mussulman thinks similarly, and so does the Parsi. We forget that we inherit our views, that we do not in the proper sense acquire them. The traveller would find that the Mussulman and the Parsi have their share of intellect and morality; he would discover that nobleness and happiness of life were less a matter of the exact form of a creed than of the measure of practice given to its moral code. Travel above all things produces breadth of view and tolerance, and no one among us is likely to deny the necessity of tolerance and openmindedness. Religious intolerance has kept back the course of civilization more than any other influence. It has barred the discovery, or at least the utilization of discovery, in science. It has prevented the application of clear principles to legislation and social amenities. If, then, travel works only so much as this mental expansion, this increasing tolerance in matters of faith, it would be an educational, a civilizing agent, needing no further recommendation. One of the great attractions of a new country like this is its average spirit of tolerance. And why is tolerance here greater than in England or in Scotland? Because in

a theological way we get all the benefits of travel without travelling; we rub shoulders with all schools; no one dominant sect is allowed to contemplate nothing but its own beauty, and to pose as an ecclesiastical Narcissus.

And whether it be in religion or in social customs the traveller would find that there are ways more than one to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, which, after all the abuse bestowed on Bentham, is, I believe, the object for which a constitution should work. And I make bold to say the same of politics and legislation. We are threatened here with too much Government in purely social matters, with step-motherly Government. This ruling of us with rods of cast-iron is due to the great error into which the uncultured are apt to fall—that social well-being can be secured by the good old rule of "giving a certain number of persons the right to have their own way, and to prevent the rest from having theirs." Travel will, at any rate, teach the lesson that social health does not depend upon some particular legislative nostrum, but that there is in human society a principle of adjustment which is too subtle for politicians to grasp by *à priori* methods, and with which excess of legislation gravely interferes. But these are subjects which require separate treatment at some other time.

I have sketched briefly and, I fear, vaguely, the influences on inward culture which travel produces—to wit, a proper perspective of one's place in the world, an unbiassed judgment of one's own civiliza-

tion, a spirit of receptiveness, openmindedness, and tolerance. There remain the practical, mostly utilitarian, lessons to be derived from travel. I have left these till last because, though they are obvious and may be very briefly summarized, there are some who may think them of the greatest importance, as being most tangible. We want to make the best of our laws, our resources, our arts, our physical and mental health, and our manners. To that end, acting with a docile eclecticism, we must learn whatever we can and wherever we can.

In politics we must occasionally go abroad for examples, analogies, or at least favourable arguments. When Lycurgus desired a new constitution for the Spartans, he travelled for many years to study the working of various laws in other lands, and to choose out the best of them. When Peter the Great sought to regenerate Russia, he did not draw on his own theories, he did not gather reports and statistics, but went himself, as a plain man, to see with his own eyes how things were done in places where he believed them to be done best. And our own budding politicians may still benefit by a similar form of education. A comparison from personal inspection, a careful and prolonged inspection, of the working of things in bureaucratic France, in the full democracy of America, in the limited monarchy of England, under the despotism of Russia, in federated Italy, and under the machine-like military system of Germany—such a comparison would go far to put an apprentice politician in the way to decide, for

instance, in what measure it is necessary for a government to interfere with individual enterprise and liberty, and in what cases such interference is not essential and therefore not good. The questions concerning capital and labour, free-trade and protection, are certainly best settled by a comparison of this kind, and not by empirical judgment based upon isolated and misleading phenomena in our own midst.

The same remark applies to our public education. There remains a serious flaw in the highest instruction of these colonies. In England, as Emerson confesses with enthusiasm, still more in Germany, the universities set about training men of scholarship and science as other workers are trained. When they pretend to produce a mathematician they produce a mathematician; when a student wants to be manufactured into a scientist, they make a scientist of him. They do not leave him, as we do in Australia, half finished or a quarter finished, in order to make another equally incomplete. A whole chair is better than two legs, a seat, and part of a back. But here we must go on in the plenitude of our self-satisfaction, thinking we have answered this argument by pointing to the amount of money we spend on education, and by alleging that the Australian brain is as good as the English or German brain. I do not doubt this last fact, but brain after all is only raw material. A young country should of all countries be plastic. England is constantly going abroad for educational information. The

English universities—most conservative of bodies—have lately reformed themselves, and what is of importance for us at this moment is the fact that they so reformed themselves largely because of the actual personal contact into which most of the agitating spirits had been brought with foreign teaching. I venture to hold that with only a slightly increased "plant," but with a different method, and a different ideal, we might ere long become self-supporting in the matter of teachers. As it is, it would be unspeakably ludicrous and the sheerest ignorance to say that we are self-supporting now. My only hope is that a sufficient number of our young Australians may see and appreciate abroad methods and standards which they cannot see at home, and that when they return they will help to establish those methods and standards here, and so emancipate their country from the educational leading-strings, without which it would surely stumble at present.

Past Exhibitions are said to have taught us much in arts and industries: coming Exhibitions are expected to teach much. And what is an Exhibition but travel coming among us? When the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet went to the mountain. When we cannot go to other countries—their factories, their shops, and their studios—we bring those countries, with their factories, shops, and studios, among ourselves in the shape of an Exhibition. And so it must go on—either we must borrow the lesson or we must borrow the teacher.

There is manifestly no need to expound further a principle which speaks for itself and which is so generally acted upon. I need, moreover, say nothing about the fact that, for commercial undertakings, for learning languages, for the proper study of art and architecture, travel is an absolute necessity. All this it will be better judgment on my part to leave to yourselves.

Yet there is one branch of civilization which deserves more than this passing attention. It is the sphere of manners. When we are children, brought up each in our domestic circle, we only learn to judge of our manners by contact with our comrades, by the remarks they are pleased to pass upon us, and by what we see them do. In one household children grow up rude, in another polite ; but the intercourse of house with house produces a general average of manners, which is taken in society as a minimum. There is an entire analogy with this in the case of communities. Each tends to develop peculiarities, to fall below or rise above the line ; yet the effect of international intercourse is to produce a general average of manners, which constitutes the criterion of civilization. The more isolated a country, the more marked the peculiarities of its manners are wont to be. I trust no one here will be offended if I say that the isolation of this country is producing a marked isolation of manners; that, in both official and personal manners there is need of much watchfulness, if we are to keep up to the standard line of true civilization. It seems to be forgotten that good

manners originally spring from good feeling, or that in any case it is well to make men, whether officially or privately, exercise a wholesome discipline over the exhibition of their less pleasing propensities. There is a manifest lack of courtesy in our public offices and in our streets. All this comes, no doubt, partly from a feeling of so-called independence; but that is a morbid independence which, while claiming personal dignity for oneself, treats the rest of the world with indignity. The most genuinely independent persons are the most courteous. I could wish that this association would severely discountenance this indiscriminating freedom of elbows and tongues and salivary glands.

It is, however, not everyone who can travel—it is only a small minority who can do so; and, in the absence of this form of self-culture, reading, discussion, and conversation may do much towards "giving us our east" in the navigation of our country. But I altogether doubt whether encyclopædias, reports, statistics, lectures, pictures, all of which make the propagation of ideas so easy nowadays, can give us any adequate notion of a foreign people. To tell us what height a man is, what he weighs, his lifting powers, his trade, the amount of his wealth, and the situation of his house, can never tell us what he is as a man and how we are to deal with him as a man. We may know whether he is big enough to knock us down, but we cannot tell exactly what sort of conduct on our part will induce him to knock us down. Nor can we know a nation fully at secondhand.

There is a vast difference between the effect of things heard and of things seen—

> "Segnius irritant animum demissa per aurem
> Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus."

Moreover, writers are very prejudiced and very fallible. Who among us could accept Mr. Froude's "Oceana" as a representation of ourselves, of our cities and our minds? I have heard an Australian gravely repeat the well-known, but exceedingly foolish, remark that England was so small that all the time he was there he thought he was going to walk over the edge. I venture to say that no visitor from Australia, America, Russia, or any other large country ever felt anything of the kind. The horizon in England is as wide as it is here, and no man yet has been afraid of falling over the horizon. Let me repeat what an American has to say, who was more anxious to see things as they are than to parrot a piece of patriotic bumptiousness:—"As soon as you enter England, which, with Wales, is no larger than the state of Georgia, this little land stretches by an illusion to the dimensions of an empire. The innumerable details, the crowded succession of towns, cities, cathedrals, castles, and great and decorated estates, the number and power of the trades and guilds, the military strength and splendour, the multitudes of rich and remarkable people—all these catching the eye and never allowing it to pause, hide all boundaries by the impression of magnificence and endless wealth." Obviously statistics and atlases are

of no value for imparting an impression such as this, which Emerson obtained from seeing the place with his own eyes.

And now, before I close my imperfect remarks, I would remind this association that one of its objects, if I understand it aright, is to find out and to put in practice whatever is best to be done in this country, with its peculiarities of position, climate, and resources. You claim to be united together in a patriotic spirit, and I have maintained that the true way to exhibit patriotism is by working without prejudice or bigotry for the improvement of your people. It has been said of America that "its geography is sublime, but its men are not." You are desirous of making your men sublime as well as your geography. To do this you seek civilization in its truest senses, material and personal. You recognize that it is not so much the numbers as the quality of our men that will make us a great nation; or, as Ruskin puts it, "A little group of wise hearts is better than a wilderness of fools." And if you are thus desirous of gathering to yourselves national culture, if you recognize the truth of the text, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, with all thy getting get understanding," you will throw aside that soul-blasting doctrine of *nil admirari*, of resolving to find nothing admirable outside yourselves, which is being spread among you. At present we are always talking of our marvellous cities, and we are beginning to think of the term as absolutely true, and not as relatively true, in the sense in which it is generously applied. We feel

intensely modern, and, in the pride of modernism, we are apt to think of older countries as decrepit or superannuated, forgetting that old countries do not stand still any more than the newest, and that after all it is only the occupation of the soil which is older, only the monuments which are antique, whereas the men and women are as young as we, and, being nearer to the centres of civilization and original thought, are perhaps even more modern than we. We have dropped into a habit of "waving our own flag at every dinner-table," a custom which is itself a certain mark of uneasiness and immaturity, since the mark of confidence and maturity is the absence of all obtrusion. As Emerson had to warn the Americans, it is only the hobbledehoy and the *parvenu* that are so sensitive about the recognition of themselves. If we have been provoked by criticism, let us use the criticism, and let us take as a motto, "In quietness and confidence shall be our strength." I have heard the demand raised for a national character; the demand that the Australian native shall be "true to himself." But there is no untruth towards oneself in learning; there is no crippling of originality in the lessons gleaned from travel. An Australian native is true to himself when he endeavours to live the life and to act the acts which it is best for an Australian to live and act; and he cannot discover all this by the unaided light of nature. With the Scotch minister in Max O'Rell's book, he should pray, "O Lord, give us receptivity—that is to say, O Lord, make us susceptible to impressions."

And if native-born Australians cannot travel, they should at least welcome among themselves the experience of travel in the shape of valuable and expert immigrants. And when the cry "Australia for the Australians" is raised, it is to be hoped that those who spread the cry will remember that any good and useful immigrant, anyone who can and will blend with our people and teach us something or do something useful for us, is thereby transformed at once into an Australian, and is a distinct gain to the future of the country.

LITERARY JUDGMENT.

THE best thinkers have long been acutely conscious that it is time to deal with the food of the mind as with the food of the body, to discriminate in our diet, to devour fewer and more nutritious volumes, and to masticate them well. What was true in Bacon's day is still truer in ours—that while some books are "to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention," others are to be read "but not curiously," and others again to be read "only in parts." We may add that large numbers are not to be read at all. Printing, which spreads bad books or indifferent books with perhaps greater ease than it spreads good books, is causing more and more embarrassment to the seeker after sound knowledge and culture.

I want to-night to offer a few thoughts upon a rational judgment of literature, not in any dogmatic way, not presuming to be a special authority, but in the hope that some, who have never yet based their opinion of books upon clear principles, may be induced to seek for such a basis. Whether they arrive at the same principles as I may propound, or at different principles, is not perhaps of the first import-

ance. The great matter is that their minds should be aroused to the proper attitude.

I shall confine myself to what may be called pure literature, literature which has no directly scientific or philosophical intention. Those works whose sole object is practical instruction in science or positive facts are not literature in the proper sense. Charles Lamb called them *biblia abiblia*, "books which are no books, things in books' clothing," meaning in especial Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," essays on population, treatises on moral philosophy, and so forth. There is only one test to apply to such books as these. If their statements are correct, if they are statements concerning things worth troubling about at all, if the reasoning is accurate and the expression clear, such works are good of their kind. Nevertheless, except in point of expression, it is not "literary" judgment which judges them.

The tests of pure literature are not so palpable. Indeed, according to Mr. Swinburne, the test of all the best poetry, for instance, is that it "eludes all tests." One need not go so far as this. There do exist tests, as I hope to show, though they are not the sort of tests which can be expressed in exact formulæ like those of mathematicians, or in definite experimental directions like those of the chemist. It is true that failure has attended all attempts to define "beauty" and "genius." Yet is it impossible to determine some at least of the most essential qualities which the words "beautiful" and "work of genius" imply?

Genuine, independent, and at the same time competent criticism of a work of art is very rare. I have in a previous lecture sufficiently expressed myself upon the unconscious cant and not altogether harmless hypocrisy which taints society in its comments upon books, pictures, statuary, or music. We are apt to pass off second-hand opinion as our own till we come to believe it is our own. In these things, as in social customs, we are apt to follow the fashion of an aristocracy *di color che sanno*—"of them that know." Now I do not recommend every man straightway to set up for a judge. I only recommend that we should be perfectly honest with ourselves; that we should not delude ourselves, but ask always, "Do I really admire this? Do I really feel this to be good or bad? Or am I merely judging through the eyes and sensibilities of others?" The simple-minded may be "contented to enjoy what others understand;" but the mischief comes in when there is neither understanding nor enjoyment, but only a pretence at them; only a feeling that one is not enjoying what one ought to enjoy, and what the best judges do enjoy.

And who are the aristocracy "of them that know"? It is far from safe to "follow my leader" in judgment of literature. Voltaire, the brilliant but superficial, declared that much of Shakspere's "Hamlet" read like the work of a "drunken savage." The same critic congratulates a friend on resolving that much of Dante is "stupidly extravagant and barbarous." Thus to a national arbiter

of taste last century Shakspere and Dante, the two supremest figures of modern literature, were largely savage or barbarian. There is plenty of material from which to draw the moral of the fallibility of our critical authorities and of ourselves. Before Shakspere had made himself the sun of English literature, Pepys, the author of the diary, saw a performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and he found it the "most insipid, ridiculous play" he had seen in his life. Hume, the essay-writer, has an astounding remark. He assumes, as a matter of course, that to compare Bunyan with Addison is as absurd as to compare "a molehill with Teneriffe." Most people now-a-days will agree that the comparison is absurd, but in exactly the reverse direction. Bunyan was a thorough genius, Addison only a stylist of talent. The poet whom Hume elects as the splendid model is —whom think you? Waller! There was, it is well to note, a time when Edmund Waller was held superior to John Milton.

Samuel Johnson, a genuine man, and for the most part a good and solid critic, could see nothing in that glorious poem, "Lycidas." If there is one charm in "Lycidas" more obvious than another, it is its wonderful melody. Yet, says Johnson, "the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing." That is to say, the numbers of—

> "Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
> So may some gentle muse
> With lucky words favour my destined urn,
> And, as he passes, turn
> And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud:"—

were "unpleasing;" they were too subtle, not mechanical enough, for Johnson's ear. Genuine and original as Johnson was, he could not wholly escape the bad influence of his time. His was an age of what was called elegance and polish. It doted on form. And therefore Johnson, no less than his weaker brethren, talks about the "modern graces and pleasing improvements" imparted to Homer by Pope's translation. He might as well have talked about the "pleasing improvement" imparted by painting the lily or tattooing a face of perfect beauty.

Contemporaries are particularly apt to overrate or underrate. What was called the Lake school of English poets—the school of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey—was utterly ridiculed by one who was himself a poet, Lord Byron. The criticism of the young lions of the "Edinburgh Review" is a standing warning. Listen to what Jeffrey had to say, even in maturer years:—"The tuneful quartos of Southey are already little better than lumber; and the rich melodies of Keats and Shelley, and the fantastical emphasis of Wordsworth, and the plebeian pathos of Crabbe, are melting fast from the field of vision. Even the splendid strains of Moore are fading into distance and dimness, and the blazing star of Byron himself is receding from its place of pride." Coleridge he does not even mention, and the two for whom he prophesies enduring fame are Rogers and Campbell. What a medley of wrongheaded opinion is here! Of all these names, it is precisely Rogers and Campbell who are least read and undoubtedly of wholly inferior

sort, while the verdict of time is placing the "fantastical emphasis" of Wordsworth above even the blazing star of Byron. Similarly the "Edinburgh Review" called Coleridge's "Christabel" a mixture of raving and drivelling, and the "Literary Register" spoke of Wordsworth's "drivelling nonsense." De Quincey could see nothing in Goethe, though Goethe's place is perhaps next to Shakspere and Dante.

Do not misunderstand me. I have quoted all these instances not to show that the leaders of contemporary criticism are always wrong, but to show that they are very fallible, that we may not completely surrender our judgment to them. They are by no means always wrong. It is a mistake to suppose, for instance, that Shakspere's merit was wholly undiscovered in his own times. The best theorist, though not the best practitioner, of poetry of that day was Ben Jonson, and it is he who pronounces what was both critically and prophetically true —

> "His learning savours not the school-like gloss
> That most consists in echoing words and terms,
> And soonest wins a man an empty name.
> * * * *
> But for his poesy, 'tis so rammed with life,
> That it will gather strength of life with being,
> And live hereafter more admired than now."

Let us look at home. Is there not likely to be just as questionable opinion prevailing among ourselves concerning Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, the Morrises, the Arnolds, and all their satellites?

I shall not at present trouble you with my own

opinion of each of these; but let me point out that in our own generation there exists, on the one side or the other, a style of criticism which will some day appear as incomprehensible as any wrongheadedness that can be quoted from Voltaire or Edinburgh reviewer. In America a prominent but dubious figure is Walt Whitman, and concerning him one critic tells us, without mincing matters, that he is nothing but a disgusting and ignorant imbecile; while another proclaims, with defiant trumpetings, that he is the "cosmical" man, the inspired personification of democracy, the Adamus of a new literary era. Now this, I say, is a curious phenomenon, and one which awakes sore distrust of finality in judgment. The same writer cannot be both an imbecile and also the cosmical man. Therefore, in the name of all that is healthy-minded, let us endeavour to obtain some clear ideas of goodness and badness in literature. Let us search for some criterion as to whether the "Chants Democratic" are just so much sheer nonsense, or whether they are the first instalment of a sublimer poetry of the future.

First we may observe that in literature, as in clothes and manners, there are transient fashions. Just as an individual varies in his moods, so a people has its moods, which affect its literary tastes. Review the history of the literature of any country, and you will see what are called "schools" or literary "periods." In that of England we have the Elizabethan period, rich and exuberant; the Queen Anne, formal and correct; the early nineteenth

century, romantic and emotional. So it has been in Greece, so it has been in Italy and France, so it will be wherever national life does not stagnate. I do not know how it is with China.

The literature of the Elizabethan epoch may be likened to a most luxuriant garden, where the richest flowers bloom in profusion, and the stately trees grow freely as nature made them—a garden with overhanging boughs, and winding walks, and pleasant daisied lawns. The literature of the Queen Anne time is like the same garden reformed on geometrical principles, its walks cut straight and at right angles, the flower-beds all symmetrical, the trees and shrubs shorn into stiff and artificial forms. Never has the effect of mannerism been more distinct than in the time of Pope and his successors. Never has man more manifestly "felt by rule and thought by precedent." "What," asks Goethe, "is a school of art? It is a single individual who goes on talking to himself for a hundred years, and feels an extreme satisfaction with his own circle of favourite ideas, be they ever so silly." There was much silliness in the Queen Anne school. In matter and manner it was like a single individual. So much was this the case that when Pope wearied of translating the "Odyssey" of Homer, he hired two hacks to finish the work, and still put his name to the whole. There is one regular orthodox manner of expression. A boot is not a boot, but "the shining leather that encased the limb." A caterpillar is not a caterpillar, but "the crawling scourge that smites the leafy plain."

Coffee is not coffee, but "the fragrant juice of Mocha's berry brown;" and, I suppose, they could not have called a spade a spade, but would have called it, say, "the toiling blade that delves the fruitful soil."

And fashion determines the substance as well as the form. The early half of last century is given over to the flattest of moralizing, what Mr. Leslie Stephen calls the "tea-party" style. The vogue for well-dressed platitudes is seen alike in the *Spectator*, in the interminable novels of Richardson, in Johnson's *Rambler*, and frequently even in Pope.

Popularity, then, need be no proof of abiding merit, nor is unpopularity necessarily a proof of demerit. An author may be right for his own age, but for that alone; he may be wrong for his own age, but right for all time. Now this fact—the fact that, for a more or less considerable period a public may be judging amiss, that it may be seeing things, not as they are, but through the coloured medium of a transient fashion—shows how rare are sound first principles. How shall we best avoid this danger of mis-seeing? Assuredly by habitual and intelligent reading of the best works of other ages and other peoples. All true views are comparative. If we read only the poems and novels and magazines of to-day, our judgment will be nought; but let us know the classics of our own and other tongues—let us absorb their style and spirit—and then, while we do not neglect the works of our contemporaries, we shall adjust and focus them aright. This is the only way to escape

slavery of opinion. There is as decided a fashion in literature to-day as ever there has been. Our novels —*Tendenz-Novellen*—with their wire-drawn analysis of character and passion and motive, and their morbid social views; our poems and sonnets, with their straining after the clever and the striking; these, when men look back at them from the middle of the twentieth century, will be seen to have a character of their own, and the trail of the time-spirit will be over them all.

The function of the critic is, therefore, apparent. It is not to find fault—it is not a merely negative function. He serves the world by directing attention to the right things. He seeks to know, and to get others to know, the eternal principles which make writing good or bad, independently of fashion or spontaneous liking and disliking. His object is to encourage the insight which realizes that a good thing is good, a beautiful thing beautiful, and a hideous thing hideous. This insight is not merely of æsthetic value; it is of moral value. And, be assured, the true critic tries to get men to avoid or to choose, not in obedience to his mere dictum, but by opening their eyes to look clearly at that which they have either not been regarding at all, or else regarding through a glass darkly.

There is a much-abused old saying, *De gustibus non est disputandum.* As a warning against unreasonable and indeterminable discussion it is useful. As a statement of absolute fact, as a relief from the necessity of exerting a judgment, it is altogether

erroneous. "There is no quarrelling about tastes" is a different thing from "There is no arguing about taste." Whether Æschylus is to be preferred to Sophocles, or Tasso to Ariosto, or Tennyson to Browning, may largely depend on individual sentiment. There may be two excellences which have no common measure; they may be equally but differently good. But when we come to compare the measurably and demonstrably inferior with the superior—Euripides with Homer, Tasso with Dante, Ben Jonson with Shakspere—then there is, and must be, a disputing about taste. That we are pleased with a thing is no proof that we ought to be pleased with it. We must ask with Ste. Beuve, "Have I a right to be amused by this, to applaud it, to be moved by it?" "Positive beauty and positive ugliness," says Ruskin, "are independent of anybody's taste." We all develop in respect of taste with advancing years and observation and culture. In our furniture and dress, in our choice of forms and colours, in our liking of pictures and music, we feel that we make some advance. The child has not the taste of the matured, nor the savage of the civilized; and is there no arguing whose taste is the better?

It is at the elements of this positive beauty that the literary critic seeks to arrive. How is he to discover them? Well, first, I think, he should naturally suppose that the most perfect literature is that which has for the longest time most unfailingly preserved a natural attraction. If a book was written 2,000 years ago, and is read still, as it has always been

read, with pleasure and admiration—if it was written 500 or 300 years ago, and has survived in undiminished freshness through all intervening changes of fashion —it is in such a book that he may most assuredly look for the secrets of absolute excellence. There is in literature, as in organic life, a survival of the fittest. It is only the thing of beauty or the thing of truth which is a joy for ever. By taking those works which have proved themselves immortal, and by examining them and them only, can the critic make sure of laying hold on the fundamental verities. What is it which makes Homer's "Odyssey" at all times and in all places, carry us back to "that ampler ether, that diviner air, and fields invested with purpureal gleams" of the youth of the world? What is it that makes Dan Chaucer still "put a spirit of youth in everything?" It is only when questions like these are answered that we can pronounce with confidence whether a debated work is the work of an imbecile or of the Adamus of a new creation.

What are the legitimate objects of pure literature? In brief, they are two—to refresh and to elevate. "Poesy," says Bacon, "serveth and conferreth to morality, magnanimity, and to delectation." These are the things pure literature is to do for us—to ennoble our minds by stimulating in them ideal aspirations, to keep alive our finer sensibilities, to refresh us and add pleasure to our lives by such delightful scenes and actions and thoughts in books as we cannot always command in the surroundings of our actual life. "We live by admiration, hope, and

love." These faculties must be fed, and the best books supply us with their nutriment. These, then, are the two great uses I find for true literature. Nor is this account at all new, for "the sublime and the beautiful" is but another way of expressing the same sense. French fiction is, therefore, mostly bad literature. Its execution may be consummately artistic, but it is meant for depraved tastes and the depravation of taste. Ruskin asserts that all good works of art have "use or truth," they aim "either at stating a true thing or adorning a serviceable one." French fiction is not true, and it is not serviceable. Zola has his defenders. They say he is but a realistic painter, out-Hogarthing Hogarth, it is true, but intending no help, but rather hindrance, to vice. When one hears this one is reminded of sturdy old Johnson. They were talking of Rousseau's "La Nouvelle Heloïse." Said Boswell, "I don't deny, sir, that his novel may perhaps do harm, but I cannot think his intention was bad." "Sir," replied Johnson, "that will not do. We cannot prove any man's intention to be bad. You may shoot a man through the head and say you intended to miss him, but the judge will order you to be hanged." The Thebans, it is said, went so far as to inflict a penalty on the man who, in pictorial or plastic art, imitated ideal ugliness; so conscious were they of art's true purpose. Rhopographer or rhyparographer, ragpainter or dirt-painter, were the depreciatory terms, meant and felt, for those who indulged in embodying the hideous or the vile.

Assuming that the province of literature is to impart "morality, magnanimity, and delectation," we may look at all such work in a twofold way. We may look at the matter and the manner, the substance and the form. The author must have something worthy to say, and some worthy way of saying it. He must not be open to the Frenchman's criticism—"This writer has said exactly what he wanted, only, unfortunately, what he wanted to say was nothing." Furthermore, he must be able to say the thing he has to say with skill or with beauty.

Above all things, the great writer must have something to tell, some intention, something about which he is in earnest. I have often sought to lay my finger upon that supreme quality which chiefly distinguishes the immortal works from the transient, a quality which is not mere diction, not mere art, not mere melody, nor yet mere intellect. All these are, indeed, essential to the best, but these alone, do not, if one examines well, make up immortality. There is a salt and savour over and above these. It is very obvious when discovered, and when I name it you will regard it as a poor truism. Yet for myself I willingly avow that only years of reading have brought me to it. It is nothing else but sincerity, single-heartedness, being in earnest. Reality of intention and love of the work for the work's sake must ever come first. I now understand what Milton meant when he said that poetry must be "simple, sensuous, passionate." Let us put "passionate" first. I understand, too, what Matthew Arnold meant by

"truth and high seriousness" as the chief note of the classic. Says the pithy Vauvenargues, "Great thoughts come from the heart;" and this, no doubt, is the secret of great writing—that it comes from the heart, is not a creation of unwarmed intellect. *Facit indignatio versus*, and other heartfelt passions besides *indignatio*. Sanity and power of intellect, sanity and power of language must be there as well; but sincerity is the leaven which leavens the whole lump. You know how differently we are affected by two orators or preachers. The one may be the more fluent, clear, logically acute, the more cultivated in language and manner; yet the other may mould and sway us more. Why? Because the latter may manifestly mean and feel in a more single-hearted way what he is saying, not speaking for the sake of brilliancy and reputation, but because he really wants to impress something upon us. It is this ferver which constitutes the spell of the old Hebrew prophets. George Sand claims that she has always written "with the real blood of her heart, and the real flame of her thought." It is so with all the absolutely best writers. It is the real blood of their heart and the real flame of their thought which produce the rich colour and warmth of their creations. "What makes a poet?" asks Goethe; and he replies, "A heart brimful of some noble passion." I cannot remember Ruskin's exact words, but somewhere he too lays it down that, in order to create a thoroughly good work of art of any kind, a man must love to think about it, to look at it; he must have his

mind's eye upon it, and not upon the money or the fame it will bring.

A sham carries its own condemnation. Samuel Johnson was very severe on sham pastorals and sham love-poetry. "Who will hear of sheep and goats and myrtle-bowers through five acts?" Johnson himself finds his own chief claim in his earnestness, in the fact that, as a rule, he thought and meant what he said, and said it at first hand. And Johnson naturally reminds us of Boswell. Why did Boswell write such an admirable book as his "Life of Johnson?" Because he was a fool, says Macaulay. If that were the qualification, why are there not plenty more good books? Yes, but he was a unique fool, adds Macaulay. Now Macaulay was looking for a brilliant paradox and not for the truth. Boswell wrote so excellent a book for no other reason than that he was sincere and single-hearted about it. His reverence and love for Johnson were so genuine that they made him notice and remember and freshly record doings and sayings of his hero, which others would either not have seen or else have forgotten; and, in writing thus, his heart was upon his hero and not upon James Boswell's honour and glory. I have named Macaulay. Macaulay is admired, and justly admired, in virtue of his style; but he cannot rank very high, nor endure very long, because he is not thinking of the right thing; he is thinking of the form and the effect, when he ought to be thinking of the substance and the truth. So, too, says the author of "Obiter Dicta": "Macaulay's style is ineffectual

for telling the truth about anything, *splendide mendax.*"

The greatest poets and prose-writers alike are sincere. "Chaucer," remarks Coleridge, "constructed his poems from the inborn joyousness of his nature." There is no great art of language or depth of thought in such verses as—

> "Herkneth the blisful briddes how they synge,
> And seeth the fresche flowres how they sprynge!
> Ful is my herte of revel and solace:"

but there is evident sincerity. Had Chaucer not meant what he was saying, he could not have been so natural and straightforward as that, and we, in reading him, should not have felt the spring renewed within ourselves as he always makes us feel it. Listen again—

> "And as for me, though that I can but lyte,
> On bookës for to rede I me delyte;
> And to hem give I feyth and full credence,
> And in myn herte have hem in reverence,
> So hertely that there is gamë none
> That from my bookës maketh me to gon,
> But it be seldom on the holyday—
> Save, certeynly, when that the monthe of May
> Is comen, and that I here the fowlës syngen,
> And that the flowres ginnen for to spryngen,
> Farewell my bookes and my devocioun."

Here there is no aiming at effect, no elaboration of art, no straining after descriptive perfection. He has something in his heart to say, and he says it in the words of his heart.

How different is he from the "correct" school of last century, by whom, according to "Guesses at Truth," "first one thing was described and reflected upon, then something else was described and reflected upon, and then some third thing," not because the writer cared anything about those things, not because the reflections sprang naturally from those things, but because he felt it to be a canon of correctness that he should write in that way and no other.

One work of most considerable artistic merit, far-famed for its polish of diction, is altogether empty of other value by reason of its manifest want of sincerity. I speak of Pope's "Essay on Man." There is much genuine poetry in Pope, but I deal only with this particular work. Pope pretends a desire to "vindicate the ways of God to man," and he proceeds to do so in a series of lines which are among the cleverest and best known in our language. But they do not ring true; they often contradict themselves, and we know why they should. They do not proceed from Pope's own conviction. He was only versifying by a *tour de force* what another man had first written in prose. Note the beginning—

> "Awake, my St. John, leave all meaner things
> To low ambition and the pride of kings.
> Let us (since life can little more supply
> Than just to look about us and to die)—

Observe the immediate strain after an epigram. Who can help feeling that the "pride of kings" is dragged in by an effort of style, apart from real conviction or

connection with the matter? It is the same throughout.

There are two passages which I am wont to compare when thinking on this subject. Their theme is the same—the omnipresence of the Deity. One is in Pope, the other in Wordsworth. Says Pope—

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
> That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
> Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame,
> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
> Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
> As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
> As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns
> As the rapt seraph that adores and burns."

Now, this is poetry of almost consummate skill, the work of a brilliant man. Except in its grammar, and in the detestable line "As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart," its diction could hardly be improved. But the line I have quoted is more than a weakness; it is a betrayal. The whole piece lacks the ring of sincerity. Pope is evidently not filled with the idea of the Divine omnipresence, but with the idea of elaborate execution. "The vile man that mourns" is, we feel, due to the exigence of an antithesis to the "rapt seraph that burns." Nothing else in the list is "vile," nor, being thus perfused with divinity, should man be vile. Nor was Pope, in fact, burdened with a sense of human vileness and mournfulness.

Now hear a passage from "Tintern Abbey:"—

> "I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

This is poetry of more than skill. It is a genuine utterance; and I am willing to wholly stake my credit for any literary judgment upon my preference for both the harmony and the sense of this passage over Pope's clever glittering couplets. The poet need not have told us, "I have felt."

Wordsworth is always thus eloquent and harmonious when he is writing of that for which he really cares—nature and nature's suggestions. It is when he comes to trivialities, pedlars and blackthorns, of which he has nothing real or affecting to tell, that his verse becomes flat and insipid and dull.

There is little need to pursue this truth further. Yet take Milton. The grand "organ voice" alone would sustain "Paradise Lost" and "Lycidas:" the compass and grace of diction would preserve "Comus;" but no one can read Milton without a consciousness of more than grandeur of diction. There is a pervading grandeur of demeanour about the author, who had formally and seriously dedicated himself to the poetic office. Take, again, a writer

whose personal and literary character are very far removed from Milton's—I mean Montaigne. Montaigne's essays are always charming. Analysis finds it hard to tell why. They have no art in them, no particular originality, eloquence, or depth of thought. But Montaigne himself reveals the secret in his very first sentence—"C'est icy un livre de bonne foy, lecteur"—"Reader, this is an *honest* book." That is its charm. It discloses the heart-thoughts of the man, a man who, as Dean Church puts it, really thinks that his experiences may claim our sympathy. He was, therefore, called egoist. The word is said to have been invented for him. But this honest egoism is precisely his charm. Compare his essays with the polite commonplaces of the "Spectator," and you will find that the one writer is saying what he thinks, while the other is saying what he hopes it is the proper thing to say.

I avoid, as far as possible, direct criticism of contemporaries; but I feel with Mr. Lowell that modern poets appear rather "to tease their minds into a fury than to infuse them with the deliberate heats of their matured conception, and strive to replace the rapture of the mind with a fervent intensity of phrase." Swinburne is one of these. I have before me the last series of "Poems and Ballads," and I find the first poem, an "Ode to March," in the well-known style. Here are some of its lines—

"And now that the rage of thy rapture is satiate with revel
and ravin and spoil of the snow,
And the branches it brightened are broken, and shattered
the tree-tops that only thy wrath could lay low;

> How should not thy lovers rejoice in thee, leader and lord
> of the year that exults to be born,
> So strong in thy strength and so glad of thy gladness,
> whose laughter puts winter and sorrow to scorn?"

Perhaps the majority of readers would much admire this passage. Now, I may be wholly mistaken, but it seems to me to be what the Greeks would call "frigid." It seems to be an instance of teasing the words into a fury without anything very definite to say. I admit the skill of language, but that skill only serves to cover a lack of intention. The art itself is far from perfect; it does not conceal, but obtrudes itself. I do not indeed hold that all works of art ought to have a definite practical moral; I only mean that a writer should appear to be writing what he sincerely feels to be of value, and not what he thinks will best manifest his skill of execution.

What is inspiration? It is such sincerity drawing upon unwonted depths of sensibility. One man is capable of being stirred to profounder depths than another. Some may go all their lives without being able to understand what Wordsworth meant by saying that

> "The meanest flower which blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Or by his

> "Light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the poet's dream."

It is only exquisite sensibilities which can experience the divine afflatus, or that feeling which Plato

describes when "a light as if leaping from a fire will all of a sudden be kindled in the soul." And this natural capacity and incapacity for feeling form the justification of the proverb, "The poet is born, not made" In point of art he can be made; but, when his art is complete, his work may still be in the state of that painting of which the disappointed critic could only say, with a snap of his fingers, "but it wants—that!"

Suppose the writer earnest; suppose his sensibility acute; then he possesses that supreme quality, self-identification with his subject. Is he constructing imaginary characters? Then he feels himself to be those characters. He loses himself in them. He knows what they should feel and do, because he himself feels it and would do it. Longinus chooses well when he selects the silence of Ajax, in the "Odyssey" as a stroke of genius. "So I spake, but he answered me not a word, and passed on to Erebus after the other spirits of the departed dead." Scott is excellent; yet compare the characters in Shakspere's plays with those in Scott's novels. Says Carlyle, "While Shakspere works from the heart outwards, Scott works from the skin inwards, never getting near the heart of men." Scott's characters are constructed by logic, Shakspere's by feeling. Hence Scott's characters are apt to become colourless and monotonous. Shakspere's are all distinct, men or women—Hamlet, Othello, Romeo, Shylock, Falstaff, or Portia, Juliet, Cordelia, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth. These are no machine-made figures, but constructions

from the real blood of the heart and the real flame of the thought.

No one can define genius. Yet genius is largely this absorption. Genius implies insight into the inmost essences of things. But such insight comes largely from possession by the subject. Genius, it is said, is the "gift of making the common marvellous." But the common is only made marvellous by a man of extraordinary faculties, who sees into things while other men see round and about them. His spiritual eye is more sensitive and more penetrating. A gift this certainly is, and because it displays itself in a manner beyond the reach of rule or art it has obtained this name—Genius—the familiar spirit attending one's natal day. In pagan terms, "*Igneus est ollis vigor et cœlestis origo ;*" in Christian language, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights."

Carlyle possessed a spiritual eye of wonderful power. He beheld perfect scenes of the past in every minutest detail, revealed, it has been said, as if by flashes of lightning. Dante's imagination was so vivid that the good people of Verona used to say of him, "That is the man who has been in hell." We need not here analyse, with Ruskin, imagination associative, penetrative, and contemplative. Let us simply take his definition :—"Imagination is the power of seeing anything we describe as if it were real, so that, looking at it as we describe, points may strike us which will give a vividness to the description that would not have occurred to vague memory, or

been easil borrowed from the expressions of other writers." My present insistence is that this power largely comes from sincere and single-hearted absorption in the subject.

Next, imagination and insight are bound up with what is often regarded as the purely artistic side of a composition—I mean with style. "The style belongs to the man," said Buffon. The phrase has been made both stronger and truer—"The style is the man." Style and thought act and re-act on each other. It is, for instance, invariably found that, as the thought rises into dignity and pathos, the language rises with it in strength and rhythm. "Language," says Wordsworth, "should be the incarnation of the thought"—that is to say, not a mere external dress adapted to the thought, but the very embodiment of the thought itself, the only true form it can take to call its own. When Montaigne has been reading certain of the noted classics of style, he remarks, "I do not call this good expression; I call it good thinking." Excellence of style may indeed be analysed with Longinus into various elements, but they are intimately connected. You may, it is true, have fine diction and fine figures of speech, and clear exposition, without much imagination or feeling; but if you have the feeling and the imagination, your figures will almost necessarily be noble, your diction noble. Real inspiration conceives its images naturally, and images naturally conceived fit into style with absolute completeness and beauty. Shelley's

> "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity"

could not have sprung from a mere exertion of the wits. The merely talented man's images do not suggest themselves in this way; they are searched for, and more or less forced upon the subject. They are but approximations. Wordsworth exclaims—

> "O nightingale, thou surely art
> A creature of a fiery heart."

"Fiery" is precisely the word. It came of itself. How do we know? Because, when the talented *Edinburgh* reviewer finds fault with the epithet, Wordsworth sits down in cold blood to consider it, and, in the absence of the feeling which dictated it, he changes it to the sadly inferior "creature of ebullient heart." So when Dante writes of that relentless, changeless rain of fire, he says it

> "Fell like broad snowflakes when the wind is still."

That is the incarnation of the thought. In his mind's eye the poet saw the fire falling precisely so: the thing and its similitude are beheld in one and the same glance.

We may now leave the subject of this genuineness and sincere sensibility, which is the grand essential of sublime writing, and come to the properly intellectual side, the side of skill and art of expression. Apart from originality and depth and fervour of thought, what is the criterion of good writing as writing from an artistic point of view? Is it richness of expression, or forcibleness, or lucidity? Is it

vividness of delineation, or novelty of treatment? Well, it may be all these; but where so many excellences may appear in various degrees, we still want some universal criterion. Assuming an equal command of diction, an equal power of imagination, the distinguishing element would lie in directness, straightforwardness, writing straight to the object, saying what one means, no more and no less. The test of a good style, say the authors of "Guesses at Truth," is to be found in the untranslatableness of a passage in terms of the same language without injury to the meaning. One might put it thus: every word must be necessary, or at least useful; it must aid the vision, assist the understanding, or work upon the emotions.

There is nothing upon which more false taste prevails than upon literary composition. Let me illustrate the matter for a moment by the aid of architecture. Imagine a row of stately columns in the façade of some noble structure; let those columns be Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, as you will. You will notice that their shafts are all simple, and that such ornament as they possess is at the capital, where the horizontal and vertical lines are to meet. The ornament is there for a purpose, to spare the abruptness of transition; and which shape the ornament shall take is fairly "a matter of taste." Now again, suppose we begin to modify those shafts by means of grooves running vertically; here the eye is not displeased; there is significance in the fact that those lines seem by an illusion to help in the supporting

strength and natural upward striving of the pillars. But go further, and begin to bedeck the same shafts with festoonings and reliefs and fantastic figurings: good taste at once revolts. The ornamentation is meaningless, it helps nothing, it is obtrusive, and it offends.

So it is with literary style. Take the most consummate orator, Demosthenes. Everything is natural, straightforward, possessed of a purpose; figures of speech, where they occur, help forward the matter; it seems as if no word could be taken away and no word reasonably added. But consider a flowery modern oration. At this passage and that we halt. We say, "This is laboured and strained; this is assuredly far-fetched and incongruous," and so forth. I have mentioned a Greek. The Greeks, unlike us, had fixed principles of judgment. It was so in all their arts. The dominant note with them was self-restraint, perfect sobriety and sanity. They had a proverb—"The half is more than the whole." They hated the fantastic, the meaningless, the bombastic, the vague, and the obscure. Above all things they prized a noble simplicity. Modern taste is, I fear, otherwise. Very many, perhaps the greater number, would feel no offence at the filigree-work on our column-shafts. In literature, it is often precisely these idle ornaments of which men are most enamoured. A Greek would have said, "I will remember thee." So would a Chaucer, a Shakspere, or a Milton. But the popular taste and the inferior artist prefer it in this form:

"Thy image on her wing
Before my Memory's eye shall Fancy bring,"

with attention to the capital letters. Examine the expression, and the "wing" is an absurdity. Apply the test of good style, and we may translate in terms of the same language, "I will remember thee," not only without injury, but with actual gain to the meaning. The best writers may be known by their simplicity. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." Had exactly this expression been written in Greek, there are translators who would render it in some such Swinburnian style as this,

"For the bliss and the blessing of beauty are deathless and doomless for aye."

It is a safe rule for all good prose writing that words are but means to an end; they should not divert attention to themselves by any gaudiness or glitter. The old writing-masters used to say—"Red ink for ornament, black for use." There are periods of literary craze, and I am not sure that this is not one of them, in which the "red ink" of ornamental expression almost obscures the plain black of good sense. After what is called the "Revival of Learning" a most absurd passion for a learned style prevailed. Gongora in Spain with his *estilo culto*, Marini in Italy, Du Bartas in France, Lyly in England, were the great exponents of this finical school. If there was a last possible way one would think of, that was the way in which they would prefer to

express themselves. You will remember the scene in "Love's Labour Lost"—

King.—"A letter from the magnificent Armado."
Longaville.—"How low soever the matter, I hope in God for high words."

And he gets them, in this shape—"Great deputy, the welkin's vice-gerent and sole dominator of Navarre, my soul's earth's god and body's fostering patron"—and so on.

I have already mentioned Johnson's approval of Pope's translation of Homer, with its "modern graces and pleasing improvements." Says Homer:—"The stars shone round the bright moon in exceeding splendour." That is not good enough for Pope; it says too obviously just what it means. It requires a "modern grace and pleasing improvement," and he gives it—

"Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole."

The moon must have a throne; the stars must "roll," not shine fixedly, as Homer saw them in his vision; we must be reminded that the stars are "unnumbered;" and of all tawdry vulgarity of thought and expression I know nothing worse than "gild the glowing pole." The psalms of David, in our prose translation, are in point of language unsurpassable. Whether a man understands what is good and what is bad may be surely discovered from his preference of this magnificent prose to the pleasing improvements of Tate and Brady.

How many are there who read Johnson's

> "Let observation, with extensive view,
> Survey mankind from China to Peru,"

and remain unconscious that there is anything wrong! Yet look at the words closely. What do they mean? Coleridge tells us. They mean, "Let observation, with extensive observation, observe mankind extensively." The man who could write this, and who habitually wrote in that ponderous dialect which goes by the name of Johnsonese, might well fail to judge properly of "Lycidas."

I have spoken of the virtue of simplicity. Simplicity of style is not to be confused with simpleness of thought. Wordsworth's expression is always simple; the difference between his good poems and his poor poems lies in the different values of thought. He has been taunted with lines like—

> "I've measured it from side to side;
> 'Tis three feet long and two feet wide."

But one notices that the taunt has been at the words, whereas the real objection lies to the substance. Such a fact has no relation to poetry. As verse, it has no reason for its existence. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" is equally simple in language, but it embodies a thought deserving of a poetical setting. Therein lies the difference. So again—

> "And I have travelled far as Hull, to see
> What clothes he might have left or other property."

One laughs at this. Why? At the notion of these goods and chattels figuring in such attire, at the notion of relating such matters in verse at all. Contrast this with the same simplicity of language in

> "The meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

On the other hand, directness of expression is not incompatible with, but is largely assisted by, technical finish, studied terseness and correctness. The "correct" writers of last century, despite their love of false ornament, had the merit of securing the most perfect expression when they chose. Lines of Pope and Gray and Johnson rank next to those of Shakspere in our stock of common phrases. Such are :—

> "The feast of reason and the flow of soul."
> "Shall feel the ruling passion strong in death."
> "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread."
> "To point a moral and adorn a tale."

These are lines which, as Ste. Beuve says, are expressed once for all. They may have cost effort, but that is not the point. The point is that they illustrate the fact that, after all, what we really care for, what we find will wear best, is lucid straightforward expression. And this is what leads Cardinal Newman to declare—"I do not claim for a great author, as such, a great depth of thought or breadth of view, or philosophy, or sagacity, or knowledge of human nature, or experience of human life; but I ascribe to him as his characteristic gift, in a large sense, the faculty of expression."

Let me, in conclusion, bind together my remarks by tracing briefly the ordinary development of literary judgment in a thoughtful man's mind. In earliest youth, when books are new and full of authority to him, he simply receives them as he is told to receive them. What serious or elevating reading he has may or may not be congenial to him. He is told that such and such—Homer, Dante, Shakspere, Thucydides, Bacon—are classical works, and that such and such others, though of exalted rank, are lower than these. In his heart of hearts he is, perhaps, not wholly convinced of the facts; more likely he has never sounded his heart of hearts on the matter. He cannot comprehend what that great thing is which his cultivated elders find in Shakspere over and above the plots.

As he advances in literary education his eyes are first opened to certain excellences of diction. He is particularly struck by skill and art of phrase. He loves the clever and the brilliant. He marks in his books passages which he thinks particularly fine—the sort of passages which, above all others, he would have chosen to write himself. The Greeks had a term for such spirited elegancies and boldnesses. They called them *neanika*, "young-man efforts," because the young man delights in fine flights of fancy and striking images.

Follow him further—his mind is maturing, his reading is less upon the surface. He begins to look more for thoughts underlying the words. He doubts sometimes whether this luscious-looking poetical fruit

is a natural fruit, or only an imitation in painted wax. Books begin to drop into an order of greatness in his mind. In reading his old books he comes upon those marked passages and wonders why he should have marked them. He seems to detect forced and fantastic phrases and images, attempting to hide the poverty of the thought. He gets into a habit of reducing what he reads to plain terms, and he finds that what he is admiring now is that which rings sound and true, the noble rather than the fine. He still wants, and will always want, the composition to be shot through and through with warmth and colour, but the warmth and colour must come from the "real blood of the heart and the real flame of the thought." Gradually there dawns upon him what Goethe learned from Oeser was the last lesson of art—that beauty consists in naturalness, simplicity, and repose.

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